BLENHEIM LODGE,

A NOVEL

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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(2 vola)

BLENHEIM LODGE.

THE THE THOUGHT THE THE SERVICE LETTERI

of English English and Line William

EDWARD MILBANKE Esq.

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TO Stroll strill offer

CHARLES ELLIOT Esq.

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BLENHEIM LODGE.

7HAT a strange fellow you are, Elliot; to expect an answer to your almost incomprehensible letter (at least to my common place understanding) without deigning to inform me what part of the kingdom of Great Britain to direct one to. If it had not been for the kind fouls at the post office, you certainly would have waited till you B thought

thought the information necessary. But how could fuch a trivial circumstance occur to a head filled with the important thoughts of a pert flirting girl. You cannot cut my throat, Elliot, just yet, or perhaps I might not have given my opinion thus freely, and unasked, of the enchanting Eliza Vernon; who, it feems, is one of the most satirical flippant little devils that ever was fent into the world. How the deuce came you to think of falling in love with her? why not chuse her fifter? who is really much the handsomest by all account; sensible, civil, and good natured into the bargain. . But I have no very high idea of your constancy as a lover, though to do you justice you make a tolerable friend as times go.

You ask if my father seemed glad to see me? why, fath, not too much of that: a small portion of kindness and affection

affection with him, you know, goes a great way; however my dear excellent mother made ample amends for the lukewarm reception I received from him; my fifters feemed to vie with each other in expressing their joy at my return; they are both amazingly improved; Harriet still bears the belle for beauty; her eyes are, if possible, blacker and brighter than ever, but she looks rather melancholy; I fancy the retired fituation of Blenheim Lodge does not quite agree with her uncommon fondness for dress and gadding, which, I believe, is the end of her wishes. Fanny łooks a little grave too, but she is in character, and a good girl. This is trifling, is it not Charles; instead of fending you chapter and verse, which you feem to expect, of how, why, and wherefore, my knowing father came to plump himself so securely into the comfortable three thousand a year his brother

ther left to a girl supposed to be his daughter; but you know the old adage, and poor Sir William, though no fool, was mistaken: from my foul I with the poor thing had it still, for I don't know what will become of her, educated and accustomed, as she has hitherto been, to wealth and elegance. But to commence my tale: this good uncle of mine, you are to understand, in the days of his youth, and hey day of his blood, was ridiculous enough to fall in love with a pretty farmer's daughter, and wicked enough to attempt making her his without the confent of the church; but the girl proved virtuous upon trial, and fo uncle e'en married her, to the no small chagrin of his dearly beloved brother, who, from the delicacy of his constitution, was in hopes of his popping off instead of committing matrimony; however he had the pleafure of hearing that this cherry cheeked fair.

fair, who had contrived to become nothing less than the wife of a baronet, proved a vixen, and plagued her husband gloriously.

Low in ideas, and scarcely in possesfion of her fenses at finding herself thus raised from carrying a milk pail to riding in her coach, she soon contrived to give Nunky a high conception of connubial felicity, by evincing a tolerable proportion of the female esprit in her composition; my father says she beat him, but I would not have you take all for gospel that issues from his lips, as he no doubt makes his own ftory as favorable as possible; however we will let that matter rest, as I have not time for investigation, and get to the end of this dry business, which I am heartily tired of already. While Sir William was absent from Blenheim Lodge,

13

Lodge, attending parliament, his lady fer off on a vifit to some of her kindred in Wales: and on her return was accompanied by a fine girl about two months old, whom she introduced to her husband as his own. He was delighted with the present, and never dreamed of a deception; besides she had informed him, previous to their feparation, of her being in a prolific way. Things went on in their old stile till lady Milbanke fortunately fell a victim to the small pox; Sir William now devoted all his thoughts to the rearing of this little charge, for whom his fondness . was unbounded; and well did she repay his care, for, if fame fays true, her perfon and mind kept pace in their improvements, and she made her reputed father ample amends for the attention and affection she experienced from him. Poor man! could he now fee this object of his warmest hopes, robbed

of every thing but a scanty support, and driven from a world in which she once shone with so much splendor, how acute would be his feelings! I swear, Elliot, I can almost forget I am a man, and weep over this sweet girl's hard fate!

But to proceed: no fooner did that foe to flesh and blood, Death, lay his cold hand on Sir William, than my father, who always doubted her affinity to his brother, travelled into Wales in hopes of detecting the imposture. Success attended him, extensive as his wishes; for in a retired village he found a miller and his wife, (the latter fifter to the late Lady Milbanke) who acknowledged for a daughter the blooming and supposed heiress of Blenheim Lodge. What wretches! first to abandon, then to betray their child! The first was the most pardonable, as they did it with a view of providing for her, tho' not by very BA honest

honest means; however, we will suppose the glaring prospects held out by their titled relation dazzled their weak fenses, and foon gained compliance to a scheme which could answer no other end to her than indulging her malevolent disposition. She really deserves credit too for her contrivance. My father fays she always bore him the most implacable aversion; and the knowledge of him or his inheriting his brother's fortune, if he died childless, inspired her with the idea of procuring an heir for her husband, as she had been his wife almost fix years without producing him one; but as he much wished it, his lady gained a ready belief on informing him she was in a fair way of becoming a mother and will or one woy-notines

So much for the history of Sir William Milbanke, which, after I have been at the task of writing, perhaps you will

will think not equal to the trouble of reading. I shall ever regret my absence from England when the discovery was made; for tho' I am a stranger to the lovely, unfortunate girl, I feel uncommonly interested in her future fate; my fifters have feen her, and (tho' females) allow her to be the fairest of the fair. I have ventured to hint to my father a wish of drawing her from the forlorn spot she has retired to, and placing her in a situation not quite so different to the one she has quitted; but all the confent I can get is the pleasure of hearing myfelf called a damned meddling puppy, who minds every body's bufiness but his own. What must be done, Charles?-do affift me with a little invention-you are older, and perhaps wifer.

Often have I heard my mother lament the coolness which reigned between my B 5 father

father and his brother, and plead strongly in favor of a reconciliation, but in vain: he vowed never to fee him, and forbid his children even thinking they had fuch a relation. Giving us a reason for this unnatural injunction, was too great a favor; indeed I don't think a very good one was in his power; why quarrel with a man for doing as he pleased with his own fortune, and feeling an affection for one whom he believed owed her existence to him? But I must stop my pen, and consider (though he is not a very kind one) it is still a father I am writing of. His temper has been foured perhaps by difappointment, of which he certainly has had his share, though to his own infatiate fondness for wealth most of them may be attributed. Had his wishes been bounded in a narrower compass, he would have been contented with the fortune

fortune allotted him, and thought himfelf passing rich with nine hundred a year, while thousands are living happily on much less. But his brother happened to come into the world before him, and that, I believe, has preyed not a little upon his spirits.

Pray how long is Matlock to be favored with your company? I shall expect you here the beginning of October. Harvey Powis has promifed to come and shoot with me; there is plenty of game of all forts, that we shall not want for sport; some of the hares are grey with age, as their late master was of somerciful a disposition he hardly ever suffered them to be molested; my sisters say they have met feveral so tame that they scarcely run from them. An old gamekeeper who lived in the family, and, grown superannuated in the service, is allowed a comfortable pension, has quite won

won my heart by his long stories of the goodness of his late master: the poor old fellow begs my pardon for crying, but fays he shall not live long if he cannot find fome means of feeing his dear young lady once more; hopes my honour will not be offended, but she was the pride of the country, and he shall never know another chearful day now she has left the great house; he is sure if there is an angel on earth, she is one, and does every thing the scriptures require, for the was never to happy as feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, and helping those that have none to help them. There, Elliot! how do you like old Morton's fermonlike panegyric? he really thinks I am a good fort of a young gentleman, and he likes me the more because I am the born image of good Sir William; and hopes when I come to my riches, I shall do as much good with them: now if he may be for bold

bold as to speak, he thinks I should marry young madam, and make her amends for taking away all her fortin; he thinks mayhap she would have me, though the was deadly nice, and would not let any of the great Squires round about the country come a courting to

another chemi

From what I can gather from my communicative old friend, this uncle, of whom my father gives but an indifferent character, was a most worthy being, and his fweet Sophia every thing that a female ought to be. I shall not be easy till some method is thought of to make her happy. It is impossible, though she has settled herself with her parents, the can live otherwise than miferable in fuch fociety. But this undertaking must be deferred for a short time. till I have heard what my mother favs on the subject; she, I am fure, will gladly

gladly exert every power to succour distress; I know she is in her heart a friend to her, though she is obliged for the sake of domestic tranquillity to stifle her feelings. Adieu! I am tired of writing.

Your's,

EDWARD MILBANKE.

MATUOCK

ECLIOT Me.

O Ned, you are returned just as you went, light a forest quiet, good fort

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LETTER II.

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CHARLES ELLIOT, Esq.

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EDWARD MILBANKE, Esq.

MATLOCK.

So Ned, you are returned just as you went, I find! a sober, quiet, good sort of young man! If you knew how much the character is laughed at in the polite circles, you would surely change it. I had hopes the light air of Paris would make a little alteration in you for the better. Pray have you brought an opera girl over with you? I think you might settle something that way with righteous old Morton,

Morton, for Blenheim is devilish dreary, and I think even you will want employment now and then. What if I did not date my letter, old methodical! vou will be furprized at the reason, I dare say,it never came into my head; for I wrote in a plaguy hurry and buftle, almost befide myself, occasioned by the blissful moments I was going to pass with that flippant, fatirical devil, Eliza Vernon: Oh! Ned! you must not write thus of her! tell me who gave you this flattering picture of my angel! by heavens 'tis false! she is as much every thing a female ought to be as the fweet Sophia, who, by the bye, is a fworn friend of my Eliza and her fifter. Perhaps I may be able to give you some intelligence how she spends her time. Your history entertained me a whole half hour; -upon my honor I read almost every word of Lord bless that innocent foul, Sir William, for not knowing the bargain his

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his wife picked up for him was none of his own handy works. I join with you in opinion he was in possession of a valuable I meet with many here who were acquainted with him; all lament his death, and speak of him in the highest As to the victim of your father's terms. wrath, (for he blended not mercy with justice) I have reason to think (from some effusions of friendship which fell one day in conversation from the rosy lips of my charmer) she was the universal object of admiration and envy; fortunately I never could get fight of her, though I dont know whether the would have been fo much to my tafte as the ever-fmiling Vernon: amazingly fenfible!-wonderfully accomplished !- and all that, -but cold as marble. Now I cannot for the foul of me expire for the finest woman of this stamp that ever existed; your icy fair ones never kindle a flame in my breast: however I sincerely wish it may

be in your power to make the girl fome amends for robbing her of her fortin, and think Morton's scheme a devilish good one. Marry her Ned, by all means ! indeed I do not fee how you can be off, with your exalted ideas of probity and honor; besides she is wonderfully handsome. For once be honest, Milbanke! you have often duped me and made me fool enough to suppose you really were as good, if not better, than most of my string of friends,-I say, Ned, would you have been quite so much interested in this girl's future fate, and fo ready to faivel at her hard lot, if your fifters or any body else had told you that she was a very good fort of young woman, but rather plain in her person. I cannot come near you in October; but shall be really glad if you can mount one of your fleet coursers and join me at Ash Park. I must be there, as my whimsical uncle tells me he has not long to live, and I must

must close his eyes, good foul !-that I will, for fear he should open them again: but I am almost afraid of believing him, he has broke his word so often: if he did not keep his purse strings quite so close drawn he might hold it out another ten years and welcome; but what is a spendthrift fellow to do with no provision but a scarlet coat and promises: as I hope to live he gave me twenty guineas last time we met, and bid me be a good boy, and he would take care I should never be without money. I was obliged to look grave, and thank him for his munificence with a profound bow. I cannot tell you how long I intend flaying here, 'till I have asked old Vernon when he removes his family. Why cannot you leave old Vinegar and come to us, and then you may fall in love with Arabella Vernon, as I did not chuse it. She is a nice girl, I can tell you, though not fo very much handsomer than

than her fister; but from her sometimes woe-fraught looks I suppose she has been making some thankless dog a prefent of her tender heart already. Don't let that discourage you; there are great plenty and variety of other nymphs much at your fervice, or any other young man's with your expectations. Here are the Miss Foley's just returned from the East as wise as they went-no husbands to be met with: poor things! to be fure they are a little dark coloured; but then there is an advantage in that, for your lillies and roses are short lived flowers. I have likewife the honor of being acquainted with Lady Betty Cranwell, a starch vestal of fifty years standing, to whom I will introduce you. Would you believe me, this toothless damfel is upon the look out as well as the rest; or if you should not quite approve of her, she has a niece with her, a Right Honourable too, that I dare fay may ics

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may be had in an honest way for asking for: the last mentioned fair is young, has en thousand pounds, not handsome but lively and elegant, a fad wicked diffipated little devil, and abominably affected. Perhaps your father may think twenty thousand better than ten, so never mind a few wrinkles but strike up to the aunt: in short, I don't care what you fay or what you do with any of them, except my Eliza that is to be, if she and I can settle the business and prevail with old Careful to give his confent. At prefent I shall not trouble him for it, as I dont quite know whether the girl will have any thing to fay to me when I can fummon up courage enough to be ferious: but fure she is mortal (though I fometimes have my doubts, when looking at her) and there's little chance of her being able to withstand such an attractive object; for you must allow, Ned, though you remember I am I am older, that I am a much better looking fellow for all that, than a figure you may now and then meet with in a looking-glass. What taste must the Gallic dames possess to admire you! Nassau absolutely avers it as fact, that they beset you wherever you went.—I hope you was as complying as your frigid nature would admit.

And now, Milbanke, before I take leave of you I am going to be grave; that is like your fifter Fanny, quite in character: though I have wrote it that I shall not come near you in October, yet I really feel such a wish to see you, that if September will do as well I will contrive to take a peep at you and the partridges; as for the grey hares, I should think it sacriledge to murder them. Pray will your father be civil, do you think? for I met him in town last winter, and he chose to put on a short sighted look,

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Tell your fifter Harriet I am forry I have not a heart to fling away, but I'll flirt as much as she pleases; I like black eyes of all things, and girls with fense to make use of them: from your ill-natured account of her, I think the will be a favorite with me: can you expect a young thing, and a beauty besides, to be enraptured with the bows and nods of nothing but a parcel of ancient oaks, and eternally to have her ears ferenaded with the cawing of rooks and jack daws: but here is Will with a note, I must read it .- Good bye Ned; they are going to dance below stairs, and insist on seeing me immediately; it really looks like Eliza's writing, so take another farewell from your tolerable friend as times go,

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Charles Elliot.

LETTER

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LETTER III.

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MISS HARRIET MILBANKE

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LADY CAROLINE TALBOT.

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BLENHEIM LODGE.

OH, Caroline! you must visit us child! Here is my brother come home, and I do not think Matlock can boast a more captivating object. To be sure I should like him better if his sentiments were more in unison with mine. Is it not quite absurd to hear a young fellow of sive and twenty taking one to task for not dragging about with him from morning 'till night, when there's

there's no ftirring in the open air without being in agonies for fear the fun should transform one into an Ethiopian? Upon my word its aftonishing where he met with fuch obfolete ideas; if it was not for my father I believe he would entertain us every evening with a fermon. My mother idolizes him; and Fanny (I was going to fay) is almost as great a fool. Nothing feems to give him greater pleasure than hearing an old methodistical game-keeper, who lived with our clay-cold uncle, preach away about the wonderful amiable qualities of his late master: but what is even more provoking than this, he is continually teazing one to death with questions about that girl (you know who I mean); for my part I hate her.

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He is wanting to fetch her back again; but I hope my father will not let fuch a ridiculous step be put in execution; my

Vol. I. C mother

mother too is of opinion that Providence will not continue to bless us, for fuffering fuch a valuable young creature to pine away her days in folitude. Now really I cannot for the life of me join them; belides she behaved so vastly high, and took her departure from grandeur to her papa's windmill in fuch an heroic stile, that she should smart for her airs; and with her pride, the greatest kindness that can be thown her is to let her stay where she is, as continual mortification will be her lot now her origin is brought to light. Pray did you ever fee this paragon? Fannythinks her the most beautiful creature that ever the fun shone on: my mother took us to the old parson's, where she hid herself 'till the affair was concluded, and made me tell her how much I lamented her hard case, and what happiness her friendship would afford me if she would be prevailed with to continue among us. You cannot conceive

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conceive how well I played my part, Talbot !- absolutely applied a handkerchief to my eyes; but all without effect; nothing could alter the determination of this fallen star. To quit a world she had no longer any defire to live in, was the wish of her heart; -assured me, she had ever regretted the being separated from a family she once thought herself a part of, but did not know how great a lofer she had been 'till now-begged our pardon for the innocent fraud she had been guilty of, and hoped we should find Blenheim capable of affording us as much happiness as she had enjoyed at it, and she could not wish us a larger share.

Lord! how Fanny cried, and my mother cried, and the old parson cried!quite a concert. For my part, I was fo affected I was obliged to open one of the windows and look out, to hide my perfect composure at this moving scene. Fanny is vaftly forry we have lost such

a companion

a companion as our quondam cousin; the should have liked the Lodge much better could she have had her sweet fociety; but the thoughts of her unhappiness who once reigned mistress of it gives every thing a gloomy appearance; however she has had the amiable unfortunate's picture, which hung up in the library, transplanted to her own apartment; my father was for making it a present to the consuming flames, but the foolish girl dropped on her knees to beg it's life. I am frightened to death for fear Ned should get fight of it; and was obliged to join the other day in praise of the matchless charms of the original, least he should be dragged up to visit her representative. What would have become of him! fuch a fnowy fkinwith melting blue eyes-downright Grecian nofe-auburn ringlets-and every thing the man could think of! Who was paid for painting it?

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Positively we must have you among us. Our family wants nothing now but an alliance with nobility. How do you like the found of Lady Caroline Milbanke; will it do, my dear? Confider, child, you are past twenty, so do not be difficult; though to do him justice no woman need wish for a more decent looking husband than Ned: but if you wish to catch him, you must like nothing but reading, and vifiting all the miserable huts in the village, to see whether the needy fouls who inhabit them will not be glad of a small portion of your abundance, and call their nafty ragged brats sweet little dears, and never be without fugar-plumbs in your pocket. Sing too, if possible; he is vastly fond of that accomplishment, and is himself bleffed with a very tuneable pipe, which he knows how to manage with exquisite taste. Music is likewise one of his most favorite amusements, and C 3 there

what is worst of all, you must not rouge, as he abominates the horrid practice, and would, I dare say, as soon kiss a doll as a painted woman. Only think of living a whole year in delightful Paris without losing all admiration for unvarnished nature. Its a fortunate circumstance I happen to have such a stock of genuine red and white; for if this had not been the case, I should have used some of Warren's substitutes without any remorse of conscience.

Well Caroline, do you think there is any chance of succeeding, with all these things against you? But perhaps after the good advice I have been giving you, some swain may have already sued—nor sued in vain. I really forgot you were at Matlock, where beaus are plentiful; but at this vile intolerable place not a man to be seen for love or money.

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Lord! I dare fay you have got twenty fimpering powdered fellows paying their adoration at the shrine of your ten thoufand charms and ten thousand pounds! Has that good virgin, your aunt, ftruck any of the dears to the heart yet? How diverting you must find her company; a young lady almost arrived at her grand climacteric is furely the most laughable character existing. But I hope she will die as she has lived; an immaculate spinster, for your sake. Pray does she still exhibit herself en cavalier? It is wonderful to me that a woman wants telling she is old; but no sooner does time whiten her locks, and run away with her teeth, but she borrows-I mean buys-them of fomebody elfe, and is dupe enough to vanity to suppose they will be taken for her own; not confidering if even these pass current, her wrinkles, instead of dimples, will proclaim the years she has seen. Positively if maidenhood

maidenhood should be my lot through life (petrifying thought!) when the days of youth and hopes of conquest are departed, I'll shut myself in some dark dreary cell, unknown to man, and there die of spleen and mortification. What a comfortable prospect!—surely the insensible wretches will not permit such a barbarous scheme to be put in practice! There are quite dowdies enough in the world to keep up a collection of old maids.

But to tell you a very true fecret, I begin to be dreadfully alarmed least it should be my fate; nay nothing but a miracle can prevent it, except indeed the old vicar has any sparks lest, which a few of my brilliant slashes can set in a blaze. This is but a dead kind of hope, tho' his reverence seemed vastly fond and unwilling to part with his young friend Sophy Llewellyn. I al-

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ways fuspect your grey headed fellows with their fatherly love for pretty girls. Why now should not you be melancholy mad to hear people talk of the beauty of butterflies and daifies-fall into raptures at the fight of the fetting fun between the trees—fand for hours feeding fishes, or listening to a parcel of thrilling nightingales-and then end the day with a family concert, and perhaps a lecture from mamma, which often comes to the share of your poor friend Harriet; who, meek, unoffending foul, has not a word to fay. How did I fondly flatter myself in imagination with the pleasures I should swim in when my father received Madam Fortune's present. Little did I think being buried alive was all the advantage I should derive from it. You can't conceive how delighted I was even at the fight of a brother. He, I dare fay, imputed it all to the overflowings of affection. C 5

affection. To be fure I have a very great regard for him, and did not know but he would perfuade my father to go to town in the winter, as he absolutely talks of keeping us here till the spring, moping to death, because he cannot give up his hunting.

But pray don't take an aversion to us: your presence will no doubt inspire us with new life; besides there are some Miffes (I forget their names) who with their papas and mammas defign to be our neighbours, when they hear what fort of beings are come amongst them. Your country gentlefolks have a terrible antipathy to new faces. Fanny and I, in our ride the other evening, were near overtaking two tolerable looking things who were tituping before us, but no fooner did the voices of our neighing nags invade their ears, than one of them ventured to look back; -whip went

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went the palfries; and the ladies, quick as lightning vanished from our fight. I was for sending after them to beg they would spare their necks, as we had not an influenza; but Fanny desired I would not make myself ridiculous.

Write me a long account of what every body is doing in the world.—I am dying to hear.—But do not forget to affure me you will be our guest ere long—need I say such an event will afford me pleasure. Do come, dear girl! no resusals will be accepted by your affectionate

HARRIET MILBANKE,

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LETTER

LETTER IV.

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LADY CAROLINE TALBOT

TO

MISS HARRIET MILBANKE.

MATLOCK.

Am prodigiously obliged to you, my dear Harriet, for the information contained in your long—almost too long letter; as I really am engaged so much from morning till night seeing and being seen, that I have scarcely sufficient of precious time to perform this important avocation; and yet I must not only read three sheets and a half of paper, but am expected to send an answer of equal magnitude

nitude. Is your conscience quite sealed up? But some allowance must be made for a little rustic buried alive, who is ignorant how the gay are racketting their short lived hours away. How happy you ought to think yourself, my dear, far removed from the pomps and vanities of this wicked world.

I will certainly be at Blenheim Lodge before the end of my summer campaign, that is, if that sweet fellow your brother is to be of the party. I have heard a most ravishing account of him from one of the simpering powdered beaus who is come to this place to make havock amongst female hearts. He is not one of my train; his name is Elliot; the girls are dying for him by dozens; perhaps you may get him to Blenheim; he is a particular friend of Milbanke's, though he is as well away, for if you were ten times more irresistible than you think

think yourself, he will not fall in love with you, as he is running up and down after one of the Vernons; you remember them at Queen's square, -no favorites of our's-I cannot think what business they have here. Eliza, Elliot's enslaver, is just the same saucy little minx she used to be. I am really afraid of opening my lips when the is by. Sometimes, you know, if a cotillion fet cannot be made up without one, it is vaftly convenient to have an intolerable head ach, or a for ained ancle; fuch kind of things give consequence, and then the charming fellows all look fo anxious, and croud round one fo, begging-praying-and entreating-are fure the exercise will be of service-wonder I can name illness with that enchanting glow of health in my face! Whenever one of these selfcreated maladies feizes me, this provoking chit rings for drops-ftrangles me with falts-vows I look as pale as ashes

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afthes-and thinks advice should be had, as the frequent returns of fuch unpleafant complaints must impair my health;then Elliot is abominable enough to join in her impertinence, and would not, upon any account, let me dance with fuch a swelling as he observed about my ancle when he affifted me to difmount in the morning-at last I am either obliged to fly to my own room, go and fet by the beings at the card tables, or, to show nothing can be slimmer than both my ancles, dance after all: Then I am continually hearing her joy at my fudden recovery-thinks Captain Elliot deferves a fee for curing me-and laughs, and shakes my hand till I could give her a box on the ear with no fmall degree of pleasure.

But enough of this unpleasant subject, and now for one I could hardly sleep last night for thinking of—your brother! I shall

I shall certainly have him, dont let any of the misses you mentioned come near him-men fometimes have wonderful strange fancies-I am quite enraptured with the description Elliot, not you, gives of him, and must put up with his being a little too good-there is no meeting with perfection in a husband-Mon dieu! not like rouge!-furely you joke, Harriet? or else you meant to be illnatured! Why the man cannot fee !- rouge is the life of every thing !- gives fire to the eyes and animates every feature! I will not believe his tafte can be so deparved! However, I am fure of this, if he will not like me with rouge, I shall stand no chance without-I am obliged to turn my looking glass in a morning till I have put some on, as the fight of my own face quite frightens me. As far as a few pitying tears, and fome of the contents of my purse will go, I shall comply with your instructions; though it will be horridly difagreeable

disagreeable to have all the beggars in the place at one's heels the moment one is seen out of doors. I was ready to die at the thoughts of learning to sing. Sure there never was a more unfortunate raven-voiced maid than your humble servant. I shall pretend however to be vastly delighted at hearing him, and lament that the barbarous physicians have forbid my attempting it. I can rattle the keys of the harpsichord, and when I have fascinated him with the elegance of my dress and manners, he will think I play divinely.

Now having fettled fome, and difperfed the rest of the difficulties you feem to apprehend will attend my honest endeavours to get married, I shall entertain you I hope a little with the scheme my charming youthful aunt is upon shooting old Vernon through and through across the whist table, whenever chance makes them partners; nay I begin to think

think fomething ferious will come to pass, as I caught him yesterday afternoon attempting to look tender at her, with fuch a pair of grey eyes, fo envelloped with hanging brows, that I question whether their amorous glances reached the object they were defigned for. I can hardly wish she may not succeed at last, and draw in this old fool. It will be fuch charming revenge on Miss Eliza.—A most hopeful mother in law will her ladyship make. Every year The gains feems to bring her a fresh supply of illnature, though the generally has a fufficient stock by her to make every body, who minds a word she fays miserable; for my part, she might as well vent it on the winds for the effect it has, though she fometimes exhausts my patience when I find every argument useless to prevent her making herself so amufing to her friends. Exhibit en cavalier?—oh! why every body exhibits at Matlock,

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Matlock, and Lady Betty Cranwell one of the most striking figures in the whole group. We wear nothing but habits; old and young, strait or crooked; and our men are always booted ready for any expedition we chuse to engage in. We pass our time in the most comfortable way imaginable; form parties every morning; fome walk, others ride, &c .meet at dinner, and generally end the day with dancing or walking; the old and stupid adjourn to cards; -the house is at present full-a few of the canaille have got amongst us, but the major part are very decent-no people of rank but ourselves-Lady Betty is not the only diverting character crept hither-the three Miss Townson's quite rival hergreen habits bound with gold, and buff waistcoats decorated with the same costly trimmings, they appear in, one part of the day, then, as if the feafon was not warm enough, we are put into a fever

by flaming fcarlet; the next morning they make their appearance in stripes. I believe I have gone through their whole wardrobe-where shall I begin next? Oh! powder is exploded by those on whom nature has bestowed tolerable brown, flaxen, or auburn locks. I am fure your coal blacks were never intended to follow the fashion; yet in spite of this the Townsons will show their shining fable treffes undifguifed, which contrasted with their long, thin, fallow countenances, render them very conspicuous figures. Nor are these would be thought young ladies (for Miss Stella, the last of them who came into the world, is near forty) less remarkable for manners and behaviour, than drefs and perfons (the latter one would pardon); they are talking eternally and all together; for no fooner does one begin than the other two strike up; their stories too are mostly of each other; sometimes indeed

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we are entertained with the beauty of their mother, who must be a hundred at least—then in a little time after they will contrive to tell you how much they are reckoned like her.-If you ask them about any thing which happened ten years ago, they really cannot remember the circumstance; or perhaps they will have the affurance to tell you they were at school. They were lamenting the departure of a young man who left Matlock a few days ago, and mentioning that the intimacy which had fublisted between them from childhood, made them almost consider him as a brother, when they were all out of breath, I observed he did not appear more than nineteen or twenty. Oh, no! lisped out Miss Juno, we have had many a play together in white frocks. Do laugh if you can, Harriet, at the thoughts of women between forty and fifty not having left off frocks above fifteen years; tho' should

you be too much occupied with your own cares and troubles to reward me with one smile, you must allow I deserve thanks at least for scribbling away one of the finest mornings that ever the month of August produced, when I might have had the company of a smart cockaded fellow, who hoped for the honor of attending me in a romantic strole which a party of our youths and nymphs are engaged in. I was deaf to entreaty—pleaded the calls of friendship which demanded my attention—he vowed I was a charming, cruel creature, and so we parted.

I cannot think what is the matter with you, child? dying to be married!—that feems to be your chief complaint. Entre nous, I must confess you stand little chance of meeting with a cure. Who do you think will make a wife of a girl with such dismal black eyes, and so terrible dingy a complexion? You will certainly

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certainly be wrong in refusing the old divine, if he makes you an offer. I am out of patience with your father for not fuffering you to pass next winter in town. Really you should make some eclat, or people will not believe he has got this three thousand a year, which Miss ----I cannot think of her strange name, was near tricking him out of. How came you to think of my having feen her? I dare fay she is one of your plaintive, fentimental things, or fifter Fanny would not have taken such a violent fancy to her. Really, Harriet, you are quite wicked to hate the poor girl; how can fhe help poffessing perhaps more beauty than yourself. Indeed the men all talk of her in raptures, and the women abuse her, therefore I am inclined to believe fhe is more than common; tho' it is wonderful when one considers her origin. I always think there is a diftinguishing fomething which marks the low born. Pray

Pray get your lifter's consent to let a curtain be hung before her portrait, for fear of accidents. I am quite of your opinion, that she cannot be in a better fituation than amongst her native mountains, How entertaining must she find her spluttering papa and mamma, especially if they dont talk English. What a fine opportunity for studying Welch. But foftly-I hear the harmonious voice of my virgin aunt infifting on my descending.- I can't come yet, ma'm! Intolerable girl! what mischief have you been at this whole morning? I don't like young women shutting themselves up-When do you see me do it? I desire your ladyship will attend me instantly, I have an affair of fome importance to impart to you. Horrid! I hate affairs of importance!-but perhaps old Vernon has attempted taking liberties with her, as they have been together some time, and she wants to confult what method she shall pursue to appease her offended delicacy. Adieu! Formal compliments to Lady Milbanke and your sister—love and kisses to your brother—and ever think me

Your's with all due regard,

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CAROLINE TALBOT.

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LETTER V.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

MATLOCK.

you think was the piece of importance which obliged me to leave you in such haste yesterday?—to tell you the truth, I had not then the smallest intention of favoring you with further notice quite so soon; but I should absolutely be dead and buried before the end of the week, if I had not you to partake of this secret, which all the world are to be acquainted with as soon as possible. What convenient things friends are now and then? Oh, this affair of my love-inspiring aunt

aunt is ten times worse than I apprehended Had her old spark really been quite naughty in her prefence, I would have begged him off on my knees; but for the abominable old fimpletons to make a match of it !- upon my honor, Harriet, they are in a fair way of doing this foolish piece of business! Bless my soul, what end can it be to answer? You shall hear the conversation which prefaced and concluded the information I was honored with. I am aftonished how she had the impudence to tell a girl the simple thoughts that were lurking in her imagination!-Dinner was ready before she had time to commence the detail of her morning's amusement.—I wish from my heart the young woman had been shut up like her neice, and as harmlefsly employed.

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As foon as she could withdraw after dinner, I was obliged to follow, to learn the cause of her simperings—Mind, we D 2

are just seated in her bedchamber. Lady Betty. Niece, I must beg your ferious attention for a few minutes. Certainly m'am. I am quite in a grave mood-a fhort paufe-Pray, Caroline, am I never to be considered but as an object of ridicule?—give over laughing-your behaviour is not to be endured. I cannot, indeed, my dear aunt, till you fet strait in your chair; why you will make those fine falling fhoulders quite round. Lady Betty, upright as a dart, was now fallying out of the room, but I shut the door and made her return. Why, niece, if you are determined to treat me in this unparallelled manner, it is impossible I can ever make you acquainted with the fecret I have to impart to you. Come then, if it is a fecret repose it here, pointing to my bosom; what, has any body been making propofals to you on my account? No, child, not on your account.

account. Oh, nothing of that kind then? Perhaps they were of that kind. Lord bless me! why they cannot have been to you, furely? Unless I am to be permitted having the conversation to myself uninterrupted, we had better join our party again: but suppose proposals of the kind you mention have been made to me this morning, and on my own account, is there any thing wonderful in it? Rather fo, I think. It is vaftly immaterial to me what you think: know then, the worthy Mr. Vernon has made me an offer of his heart and hand !- I will not pretend to fay I feel fentiments of a nature quite so tender, perhaps, as he deferves, but I have always thought it the duty of every woman to enter into a matrimonial connexion when a fuitable one presented itself. I do not think that which I received this morning is without objections; a misjudging world will no doubt think

think the disparity in our ages too wide; but I have weighed that, and every other point, and the result is in favor of Mr. Vernon's passion; to be sure his children will no doubt occasion me much trouble and uneasiness; mothers and daughters so nearly of an age seldom agree; however you have taken care to give me a lively idea of what I am to expect from them; still I shall not forget the relationship that exists between us, and intend to reserve half my fortune, which I shall dispose of at my death as I think proper; you will, most likely, be the only person better for it. Here she stops.

And has your ladyfhip quite fettled the point past the power of my eloquence to make a breach between you and your antiquated lover?—but upon my word he is such a shocking looking being!—have you ever seen his black and blue face upon a snowy pillow?—do steal in-

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to his room to-morrow morning-I'll go with you for fear of consequences-and I think the fight will overturn his hopes. Yes! the point is fettled past the power of your impertinence to alter! I certainly think myself arrived at an age to follow my own inclinations without being subject to the daily sarcasms of your ladyship-a short time however will separate us. Well then! cried I, if I may be one of your bride maids I will not fay another word; you must not be angry with me for thinking old Vernon, and a certain person of your acquaintance, deserve to be confined in Bedlam. till the return of their fenses. Any thing more, child? Oh! yes! a great deal!do tell me how he makes love-did he contrive to bend his gouty knees? Leave the room, Caroline! I am not in a humour to hear more of this kind of talk : had you the common feelings of your fex, you would fee the impropriety of it!

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how much do I want the company of a kind friend, instead of a giddy thought-less girl; one, to whom I could tell the doubts, the anxieties which invade the bosom of a woman when she is going to resign herself to another; indeed I am almost overpowered by the conflicting ideas which present themselves—but you are a stranger to the siner sensations of the soul, and, I dare say, would go to be married with as sew palpitations as you'd enter a playhouse.

Poor foul! what will become of her? I wonder where these fine sensations were rambled to when she was asked the question? From the blank looks of Vernon's girls, when we met this morning, I found they were apprized of the future blessing Providence intended them, and took the first opportunity of expressing my joy at the relationship which was going to take place between us.

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They were very civil upon the subject, though I could fee not at all ambitious of the honor. I fancy the gordian knot will foon be tied, as we are to fet off for town to morrow; no doubt to procure the bride's trappings, and transact fome business with the lawyers. As to the loss of half her fortune, I think the diversion of dreffing her upon the awful occasion, and witnessing the rest of the ceremony, will be fo exquisite that I shall hardly think the money thrown away. Now would not you give up the fishes, -and the iun,-and the evening concerts, and mamma's trimmings for all your paw paw tricks, to make one amongst us, when the happy time arrives for this maiden of fifty to relign her virgin charms. Oh what will she do with her feelings? I believe I must beg them of her, as she wont allow me to possess any of my own. Her old paramour is to meet us in town, and there the completion of his ardent wishes is to be fanctified. I hope they D 5 will will make hafte, as I shall be terrified to death for fear it should be known I ever fet foot in London before the Queen's birth day-then, Harriet, I whirl to Blenheim, and try my captivating powers on Edward's heart.—But if they should chance to find it steeled, and I have known more unlikely, things come to pass, I will not betake myself to dreary cells-Lord! what eat berries, and repose on rushes, my dear! no, no, hie thee to a nunnery, girl; and there you will have plenty of companions dying of spleen and mortification, besides a comely friar to fin with you at night, and grant you absolution in the morning .-Bon foir, ma tres belle Harriet. Somnus begins to make his claim upon me, and as I dismis him earlier than usual tomorrow, shall fink into his encircling arms as foon as I have informed you my name is

CAROLINE TALBOT.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

MISS VERNON

TO

SOPHIA.

VERNON PLACE.

YESTERDAY the Vernon family arrived at the seat of their progenitors; and had hardly entered the house, with band boxes, lap dogs, &c. &c. bringing up the rear, when a universal cry was heard for letters.—Any letters by last night's post?—I am sure there must be one for me, says Eliza. I don't know who it is for, squeaks careful Grace, but I have got one up stairs for somebody.

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Run! fly! cried I, dear Grace!-run Miss Bella! Why don't you see I can hardly crawl for the rheumatism in my knees; and as for flying, I must leave that to Squire Lundari, in his hairy bulloons, as the gardener reads about in the newspaper. Well then, crawl as fast as you can, and don't fay another word till you bring the letter, and I will fend my compliments to Squire Lundari, and beg a place for you next time he rides out in his hairy bulloon. Away she hobbled, declaring she would not get into one if King George was to fay he'd go along with her. At last the letter came in fight;-away flew Miss Vernon and her fifter; the latter, more nimble than an eel, procured it first, and in a moment flung it full in the face of her elder fifter, declaring Sophia should never see another line of her writing while she lived. At the name of Sophia, the poor unoffending sheet of paper was almost torn to pieces

pieces in opening. Thank you a thoufand and a thousand times, my sweet friend-you fay you are happy, and are kind enough to add, were it not for the loss of Arabella's company, almost happier than when fortune played her gambols in your presence. Can it be ?-- fure you delude me?-tho' we are apt to judge our neighbours by ourselves; and I feel how impossible I should find the reach of any thing like happiness in the dreary spot my Sophia has been driven to by the uncommon waywardness of her cruel fate. Yet believe me, but for some ties, with rapture would I fly to share it with you. I am not entirely pleafed with you for possessing so much more Stoicism than myself; for had it been otherwise, we might not have undergone a feparation of fo many miles; as I do not think my share strong enough to have carried me after those cruel relatives who have caused all the troubles you have encountered

tered with fuch a fmiling face. And are we never to meet more?—can no arguments prevail with you to quit the mountains and frisking goats you paint a defeription of in fuch glowing colours? -have you no wish remaining to join us, inhabitants of this hubble bubble, toil and trouble, wrangling, jangling world? -fye, my dear ; how can you have lived amongst us for above these twenty years, and not be more grateful for the favours shewn you when we thought we were paying our devoirs to a rich heirefs?consider the hearts you have run off with. and if you will be favage enough to remain, at least fend the poor men their property again, whom your specious manner and innocent looks committed the frauds on. Really you are quite a swindler of hearts: Sir Erederick Of born has left his native country, and flown to Italy for confolation :- how could you withstand paste buckles, brilliant rings, **fuperfine**

der, and otta of roses?—you may walk up and down amongst your hills and dales long enough before you'll see his like again.

Forgive me, dear girl, for this nonfense!—the hearing from you has given me unusual spirits.-Indeed your silence has been fo long, I began to think your Arabella was to be given up and forgotten with the rest of the world. We have been rambling about all the fummer, and fpent the last month unfortunately at Matlock. I shall have to answer for all the bad confequences which must follow from it, as the project of paying the curiolities of Derbyshire a visit was my own. Had I known of one we were to meet with there, I certainly should have deferred this trip. Oh Eve! Eve! when will thy daughters give over their proneness for straying? I can really hardly prevail

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prevail on myfelf to expound the last few enigmatical lines which employed my pen, as I know my father possesses a highplace in your esteem, and I am unwilling to make him descend. Poor man! youknow his worth, and you must have remarked his foible: you will not then be fo much furprised when the information reaches your ear, of his intention to facrifice his future comfort, and, I fear, that of those connected with him, for the fake of adding twenty thousand pounds to a fortune of which he does not at prefent spend one half. This addition however would have given no uneafinefs could it have been procured without the unpleasant appendage which belongs to it .- Ah! my love! pity us; we are going to have a mother in law; and fuch a one, fearch far and near you could not match her. There's in her all we believe ofnot heaven! - An old widow would have been quite bad enough who had loft one husband,

husband, and fretted herself into a fury because fhe had waited too long before she could get another; but what must we expect from an old maid (of quality too)-only think of my father, with his aversion to titles, marrying a lady; -yes, no less a personage than the Right Honorable Lady Betty Cranwell deigns to give him her withered hand; who, notwithftanding rank, fortune, and some beauty I believe in days of yore, must have died with the stigma of maiden on her tomb, had not the charitable Mr. Vernon taken compassion on her. As soon should 1 have expected him to forget enquiring how stocks went, as to think of encumbering himself with another wife; and what's worse, giving his children a mother in law, whose happiness and improvement has been his constant care and wish ever since heaven deprived them of their own invaluable one. Dear departed shade! how do I rejoice that those

those who have left their earthly abode to join the saints above are unacquainted with what the strange inconstant beings, whose society they have quitted, are employing themselves about!

Eliza laughs, cries, scolds and wonders,-tries all his weak fides,-hangs about his neck,-then drops on her knees,-promises if he will send his old Lady Betty word he is forry for the depredations he has committed on her heart, and laments the necessity he is under of hoping she will soon meet some more amiable man on whom she is at liberty to transfer the melting tenderness she has lavished on an ingrate (for on recollection he fears her vanity, ill-nature and pride will more than balance the fplendor of her shining attractions); that fhe will ride this and every other country. over, and procure him, if possible, a wife, as he must have one with twenty thousand pounds, de

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pounds, and the possession of a few other good qualities into the bargain; as she affures him he will feel the want of them very feverely if he really executes the deed of marrying her parchment ladyship. It's astonishing with what calmness he hears all this faucy girl scruples. not to fay; nay even kiffes her when her harangues find an end; yet still remains inflexible to perfuafion-tells her fhe views the step he is going to take with an eye of prejudice-promises us we are as dear to his heart as ever, and asks who except us will be benefited by the fortune Lady Betty will bring him. Here he is interrupted by both his daughters, who affure him he has much more to bestow than they either want or wish for, and beg he will not be at the trouble of procuring himself a wife on their account. How much all this avails will appear when I tell you he leaves us the beginning of next week and fets off to town, which

which place his fair intended left Matlock for the fame morning we did, and there he is to lead this withered rose to Hymen's temple. How wan and vivid will his godship's torch burn, when held over these grey-headed votaries.-We are not even asked to accompany him-No! our task is to be, receiving her bridal ladythip, and promising duty and obedience: the last she took no small pains to exact from us before we parted at Matlock, tho' without fuccess. Oh! fuch a scene as was played off before seven o'clock in the morning-if you have no very particular employment, my dear Sophia, do read it; perhaps it may amuse, and for a moment lull reflection; for fometimes you must be overtaken by the thought of what you were among us; tho' I know you to be superior to most of your fex, as much in mind as person, still you must feel a want of society, while you have none to converse with but your prefent ruftic and unlettered neighbours.

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Ah! talk not of happiness-I fear you cheat me with ideals! But I forget my hopes were to divert thee, and my pen has quite mistaken the way; for can unavailing fympathizings bring peace to the bosom-I would, more substantial means than prayers and wishes were in my power-and now for the parting of friends and lovers. Before I begin, I must give you a little private history:my poor father is not the only one of his family who met with his fate at Matlock, your laughing friend Eliza has brought away with her one of little Don Cupid's sharpest arrows too deep in her heart ever to be extracted, that from a most agreeable, lively, handsome red coat, who belieged her with fuch constant attention, and now and then a speaking look, that fhe furrendered quickly, nay I dont think she even stood on the defensive, but traitorously met her enemy at least half way with all her stores about her. This gallant

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gallant hero is called Elliot, and I know only of one objection my father can have to admitting him into his family, that, I fear, will be insuperable-all the gold he possesses is on his regimentals-and that will not have quite fo many charms with Squire Vernon as it has with us fair ladies. I must now bring you acquainted with Lady Caroline Talbot, niece to Lady Betty, as the acts a principal part in the tragi-comedy you will meet with presently. She is laughing herself from morning till night, and feldom fails of making people accompany her; is really entertaining, and would be agreeable were it not for the fits of airs and affectations she is sometimes seized with: she is good-natured, thoughtless and diffipated; elegant in her manners, has a good person and a tolerable face, which she rouges without mercy and before all the world, and then asks us if she uses artfor her part she would not for the univerfeWC

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verse have it thought she had a horrid natural colour; no, no, she is above rivalling the poor milk-maids; let them enjoy their cherry cheeks and welcometells you one day she is dying, and the next in quite vulgar health; treats her aunt as if the was only fent into the world entirely for her diversion and amusement; and though I have not a violent affection for the last mentioned person, yet I was sometimes almost angry with her for the ridiculous light she takes every opportunity of placing her inmakes her dance, ride on horseback, and affifts her to drefs in the extreme of fashion and extravagance. She certainly has great tafte herfelf, and really looks like a woman of fashion, but what we admire in one and twenty makes fifty appear only to be laughed at. These are the outlines of Lady Caroline's character, at least as far as I can dive-our acquaintance is scarcely of a month's standing,

standing, and perhaps she may have some amiable traits which she did not chuse to display; though I don't know that she has any real harm in her, yet her temper is the only good quality I was able to discern. The rest of the dramatis persona who are going to exhibit you are not a total stranger to, therefore I shall now draw up the curtain.

When the morning arrived for the departure of Lady Betty and her Right Honorable niece, Mr. Vernon and his not honorable daughters, from the invigorating Matlock, they all affembled (Captain Elliot of the party) to tea and coffee at quarter before fix, except the first mentioned lady, who sent down compliments to her lover desiring to be favored with his company for a few moments. Lady Caroline begged he would not go for God's sake—she was sure it must be an erroneous message, as she

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was just come from her aunt's apartment, and had left her quite en dishabille, nay the was certain her hair was not dreffed, as she saw it lying on the table. My father begged to know if her ladyship was ferious, for he feared she only meant to make him offend Lady Betty by difobeying her fummons: Oh! pray go then by all means !- for love's fake don't offend Lady Betty !- it cannot fignify though, now I think of it, as you are to be married fo foon; besides you can't imagine how beautiful she looks in a morning; Venus is a dowdy to her, I affure you. All this took up some time, and down came another embaffy to know the reason Mr. Vernon continued in the breakfast room after the message he had received. This removed him as foon as he had told Lady Caroline it was as he gueffed. She laughed-hoped we would not be frightened if the old gentleman should have a little powder brushed out Vos. I. of

of his wig on his return, for not flying fooner to his charmer. This speech was scarce finished, when a third messenger appeared, and the Miss Vernon's were requested to attend her ladyship. I wont go positively, cried Eliza-that's right, fays Lady Caroline; dont stir-she will never let you rest if you mind a word fhe fays-I am forry they did not begin wooing fooner, that we might have had a little time together-I assure you a few hints from me would be of infinite fervice to you hereafter. Now I ventured to speak, and asked Eliza what signified fitting as still as a mouse, for she must go at last. Why so she must, rejoined the volatile Lady Caroline; -come, we will all go, except Elliot, and he is only fit company for himfelf-what is the matter with you, stupid wretch? one would think you'd be all life and spirits at parting with faces you have had almost constantly before your eyes this month-I declare

I declare I am almost tired to death with people long before that time. Elliot complimented her on the happy indifference she possessed, and assured her on fome occasions he was not unlike her; he had met with those whom he thought insupportable before the expiration of one day in the month. I hope you dont mean any body prefent? though I think I have observed a particular aversion to a certain young lady not quite an hundred miles from that window. Eliza now rose from her chair, and begged I would follow her, as she thought my father would be displeased if we persevered in not going to fee what we could possibly be wanted for. Lady Caroline infifted on accompanying us, as she apprehended fome diversion was on foot.

We met my father on the stairs, who gently chid us for our delay, and returned with us into the presence of the E 2 benign

benign Lady Betty. So, young people, faid she, I think you have not shewn any very great hafte in favoring me with your company.-Why, to tell you the truth, ma'am, began her niece, we were in a high dispute, when you sent down about your legs; one would have it they were not crooked, another was fure they could not be firait, and we should not have come up at all, only for the hopes of having our curiofity fatisfied-let Mr. Vernon just lift your petticoat no higher than ancle reaches on any account. Eliza was going to laugh, and I to accompany her, at the fury which appeared in the countenance of the person this whimsical fally was addressed to; and absolutely started almost from our feats at-begone Caroline! am I never to be free from your intolerable tongue! how dare you intrude your presence! I am sure your name was not mentioned, when I defired these young women (from whom I shall hope hope for a far different behaviour) to attend me. And so I must be driven out of the room for being more dutiful than common-well, if I must not stay and hear what you are going to fay to thefe poor young women, I will have Mr. Vernon with me-then turning round, she exclaimed, bless my foul, why he is flown! frightened out of his fenses, no doubt, at my mentioning your petticoats and ancles !- well, I'll go for your fake, and keep him from laying violent hands onhimself-Now don't you forget, young women, the hint I gave you: away she then walked down stairs, and Lady Betty defired Eliza to bolt the door. Bolt the door, ma'am! why fure your ladyship is not going to murder us? So this is the obedience with which I am to be treated when I become your father's wife—this is the return I shall meet with for degrading my family by conferring my hand on a commoner; indeed I did not

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expect you would either of you want fending for, to express the joy you ought. to feel at the happiness you will experience in having a female monitor, posfessed of sufficient sense to direct your future actions and lead you up the hill of life; -one who has herfelf almost reached the fummit, and who will watch over you and keep you in that path no virtuous female ought ever to depart from. We are everlaftingly-No interruption, Miss Vernon, if you please; when I have done it will be quite time enough for you to express your thanks for the obligation I dare fay you will have a proper sense of. Do hold your tongue, Arabella, faid Eliza, and let Lady Betty finish, or we shall never get down to breakfast. As for you, Miss Eliza, my hopes indeed are faint of meeting with that duty from you which my relationship will claim-you have more than once had the monstrous rudeness not only to fmile

fmile (which would have been unpardonable) but downright laugh with the irreclaimable Lady Caroline, who repays my care and attention to her, ever fince the death of the Earl and Countels of Guilford. with the most invariable insolence; and had I foreseen the trouble and uneafiness fhe has perpetually occasioned me, I would have refused even the charge of a dying fifter. I am forry she happened to accompany me to this place, as her behaviour may induce you to follow her example; young women in your stile of life are apt to think every thing right which they hear and fee done by people in our fituation; and though you may be right ninety nine times in a hundred, yet in the prefent instance I must beg you will wave copying from people of rank. What have you to fay, now, young ladies; you are at liberty to speak.

I turned to Eliza to beg she would answer all or as much as she pleased of E 4 this

this excellent advice, and defired fhe would thank the giver in the profoundest manner, but could not even get her to hold her head up. I began to be alarmed, when at last, to my utter surprize, I beheld the trickling tears courfing each other down her dimpled cheeks. Heavens! cried I, what can be the matter with you my dear?-the matter, faid Lady Betty, why what I am happy to fee-properly affected with the advice I have done you both the honor of delivering; therefore when you are composed, I shall be glad to take my leave of you down stairs. Away she went, and Eliza, who did not want bidding to bolt the door, instantly secured it, and then returned to her chair, fobbing all the way. This lecture was only the pretended cause of her tears, for I am sure the true one was the feparation which was going to take place between her and Elliot. That insupportable old woman, she declared,

clared, had talked her spirits quite away -fhe really believed she should have had an histeric fit, for the first time in her life, if she had not left the room. Well, faid I, now she is gone and you still crycome, the cause is down stairs, and therefore don't let us give way to melancholy-pray Eliza refume yourfelf; I really don't know you; and have heard you talk quite as much in as short a time as our mamma elect performed her admirable lesson in; and yet no histeric, no tears were thought of. You must allow, Arabella, it was very tiresome to be obliged to fit and hear all her abominable nonsense. Why yes, tiresome enough, no doubt, yet hardly worth crying about I think .- Poor Eliza, I pity you; I am quite shocked to find such a modest looking young lady capable of so much artifice; I know all your wicked thoughts, child, perhaps better than you think for: fo now if your dainty histerical ladyship

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will condescend to walk down stairs, I'll attend you. Upon my word, Arabella, you are monstrous odd and provoking, and quite illnatured. Well, we won't stay and quarrel, Eliza; let us go down to breakfast; we shall be quite a family party; as I faw Elliot mount his horse a little while ago, I suppose he is gone to Buxton, as I heard him fay he was to meet some friends there this week. Very likely :- I am fure I don't know-but are you fure it was not Nassau: they are very much alike. We will go down and fee, my dear, faid I; as you look rather anxious. Good night! my Sophia-I must defer the breakfast scene till tomorrow, as I hear the supper bell, which I should not attend to if my fingers did not beg to be favored with a little respite.

THURSDAY MORNING.

Now for finishing my packet.—Mind we are safely arrived below stairs, as we were were only at the top when I left off. I affure you the descent was rather hazardous to Eliza, for I don't think she perfectly knew whether she walked down on
her heels or her head. Elliot's ride to
Buxton had sunk deep. Dear girl, I was
almost angry with myself for inventing
this trip; I hope however the pleasure of
finding him in the spot where she left
him, was equal to her concern at imagining him so indifferent as to leave Matlock without even staying to bid her
adieu.

We all drew as close as possible to the breakfast table: Lady Betty spread one napkin on her lap and tucked another into a button hole, which set her niece off immediately.—Death and samine cried she, my dear aunt why you look like an Alderman.—What are you going to do after all this mighty preparation? then snatching up all the eatables on the table,

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table, she placed them before her, and defired the would begin directly, or we should not get away all day, and she knew Miss Eliza was dying to hear the carriages drive to the door. Pray Elliot give Lady Betty some coffee or tea-why don't you ask her which she chuses? Lady Betty took this in filence, as she knew how impossible it was to stop the incorrigible Lady Caroline, as she calls her. Elliot obeyed the command given him, and poured out coffee for his napkinn'd neighbour: unfortunately Eliza happened to be placed opposite to him, and he chose her for the object of his contemplation instead of the fair one he was conveying the coffee to; her Ladythip not seeing what was designed for her, was adjusting her hat, and with her pointed elbow knocked cup, faucer and coffee out of Elliot's hand, and the contents were sprinkled plentifully over them both, tho' she had by far the largest share. Lady

Lady Caroline fat down her tea, and threw herfelf back in her chair, vowing the never faw a manœuvre of the kind performed with more neatness, and gave Elliot credit for the part he had acted: really she was astonished how he managed it so cleverly, when she considered he was looking quite another way.

Aftonished! echoed the incensed Lady Betty; and I am astonished too that any body could be so careless. What must I do? I can't think, Captain Elliot, what you got poking up for so soon; could not you have taken leave of us last night? Mistaken according to custom, replied her niece; there's no us in the case; now Elliot tell me, did you get poking up to take leave of Lady Betty, or Miss Vernon, or Mr. Vernon, or me?—mind, I don't want or expect you should tell me who was the disturber of your repose. For one moment, cried her aunt, peace!—

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I am distracted to know what I can do with my habit: all over it I declare; and my waistcoat and shirt; (for the napkin chose to flip from its confinement just before the accident.) Lady Caroline again; -my dear aunt you'll shock us young ladies to death; only think of talking of shirts in our presence; here is Mr. Vernon blushes for you-yet, as you have ventured to name shirts, I must beg you will venture to look at poor Elliot's buckskins, which will remember the coffee they have been favored with the longest day they have to live. Your Ladyship, said my father, is certainly very witty upon all occasions.—Suppose we try if fomething can be done to extricate your aunt out of her difficulties? Saying this, he went round to her; and as all agreed nothing could be done but her Ladyship's changing her dress as foon as she had an opportunity, he condoled with her on her misfortune, and the buftle ended

ended with Lady Caroline begging Elliot and her aunt would kifs and be friends. as it was a fad thing for people to part with malice in their hearts. I must fav Elliot behaved very bad thro' the whole of the difaster-he certainly was only to blame-an apology he did vouchfafe to make the offended lady; tho' with fo much ease and inattention, that if I had been the person it was addressed to I should have been as little pleased with him for it as for the mischief he had caused. Some excuse may be made for his hapless condition, as the poor man is in love to diffraction. As to Eliza, she did not dare lift her eyes up all breakfast, for fear of meeting his; a thing not improbable, as he kept them constantly fixed on her face, which I never faw appear more interesting; indeed nothing but love has ever been able to make her wear a ferious look, and she really becomes it.

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At length the rattling of coaches was heard. Eliza turned pale-Lady Betty began simpering and smirking at my father-Elliot contrived to wheel round to the back of his angel's chair-and Lady Caroline declared she was fatigued to death before she set out. Our intended plague thought it necessary to be vastly condescending; and taking hold of both our hands, hoped when we met next it would be with mutual pleasure. Oh, no doubt, cried her niece, (who seemed determined not to let one of her words or actions pass unnoticed) I dare say they wont be able to fleep the week this pleafure is to arrive-but as I told you before, you have really no delicacy nor modesty left: why only think what Mr. Vernon and you are to meet in town about. You elderly ladies think no more of playing a game at matrimony than you do a pool at your darling quadrille. Elliot laughed—Defend me! continued she,

she, how long have you been at my elbow? and what are you filling this child's head with? I protest I thought you had been out of the room. Why, you horrid wretch! I absolutely feel to blush; for tho' I don't fo much mind rebuking my good aunt before Mr. Vernon, I fhould not have faid quite fo much if I had known you had been by. Adieu! come shake hands with me; perhaps we may never meet again in this world. Lady Betty turn your cheek to Mr. Vernon, and let us fee with what grace he'll acquit himself; then wishing us a pleafant journey, and fafe arrival at Vernon Place, she gave her hand to my father, and left Elliot the felicity of conducting the ancient maiden, who now proceeded, followed by her dutiful niece, into her carriage; and happy was I to fee them drive off, tho' I had been not a little entertained with the occurrences of the last half hour.

Elliot

Elliot made but one step I believe from them to the room he left us in. Upon his entering, I walked to the window to fee what was become of my father-I think Eliza should have thanked me for this piece of kindness-I can only guess at the conversation which passed while I was looking at nothing, and shall leave you to do the fame, after I have told you the fair one's cheeks were crimfoned over, and I thought I faw fomething like a white hand drop out of one of Elliot's when I faced about. The Miss Vernons were now called .- Elliot offered me his hand; when I declined his politeness, and begg'd he would take care of my fifter, who was not very well: indeed the was near having an histeric before breakfast. Eliza said, she believed, notwithstanding the admonitions we had been fo lately favored with, I had taken a leaf out of Lady Caroline's book. I thought Miss Eliza was supe-

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rior to histerics, cried Elliot. Papa met us at the door, and we were presently seated.—Elliot received an invitation to Vernon place from the master of it—his sace brightened, and he promised faithfully to avail himself of it in less than a month. Ah! cried I, I fear we shall all be turned topsy turvy before that time. Never mind, turn which way you will, my dear Miss Vernon, depend upon it Elliot will turn with you. He kissed his hand—smack went the postillions whips, and we drove off from this fatal place.

Eliza was quite herself from the moment her swain was asked to become our visitor—It is wonderful my father should know no more than the child unborn, what his darling Eliza and Elliot have been about; for he never suspects any body will think of falling in love with his daughters, or that it is possible for them to admit into their bosoms the sly invader.

Hei 1

Hei! ho! what is the matter with my filly heart?—be quiet, I fay, rebel!

You talk, my lovely ruftic, of spending the remainder of your days in calm ferenity and retirement-" the world forgetting, by the world forgot"-the first, perhaps old Time may lend his hand in affilting you to accomplish, but indeed you must give up all hopes of the latter-go where I will you are the theme-at Matlock, we began and ended the day with you; as to Elliot, if he had not been otherwise engaged, and had ever feen you, I should have supposed your more than mortal appearance had frightened him out of his heart-continually enquiring if we had heard from you; wanted to know how you fpent your time, and whether you were happy -I hardly dare write the name of Milbanke—a name you have fuch cause to love and detest, as I fear the fight of it will

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will awaken sensations in the gentle bosom of my Sophia which are better dormant. Elliot, and the fon of the cruel unfeeling man who robbed you almost of support, are friends-he gives him a character totally the reverse of his unkind fatherhe really wonders how fuch a handsome fellow can be fo good, and questions whether he ever faw himself in his life, as he has heard fome, who knew him at College, fwear he had not a looking glass in his room. I am happy there is a worthy left to keep up the family of Milbanke; for if young Edward had been as vile as old Edward, fociety would have no cause to wish for any thing but it's extirpation. Positively then I have not a word to fay to you, Sophia. How came you to think I should fatigue myself with writing letters. Oh! yes, I recollect, Grace desires her duty and kind farvice to you; she thought some how the letter Miss Eliza gave her poor knees such a ierk

jerk to get at was from Madam Sophy, Pray give my love to Goody Apshenkin, and tell her I will send her a present of cheese and leeks the first opportunity, for beguiling, by her oddities, some of your lonely hours. And now farewel!—a thousand times farewel!—Believe me if possible more than ever

Your fincerely affectionate

Andrew Constant State of Constant of the Const

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ARABELLA VERNON.

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LETTER VII.

CHARLES ELLIOT Esq.

TO

EDWARD MILBANKE Esq.

ASH PARK.

PRAY, Ned, are you going to give up all your wild friends, and turn faint? Do you really think, after the uncommon, civil, well wrote letter I favored you with, in answer to the tale you sent me, it is using me even like a gentleman not to honor me with one line of thanks in return? I have got nobody else that I chuse to write to just now, or I'd be——I was going to swear, but if you should have any thoughts

thoughts of wearing your hair in buckle for the rest of your life, perhaps you may put the profane paper in the fire before you are made acquainted with half the good things I have to relate. First, I have lost my girl-till I have time to go and fee after her; fecondly, I received a fummons from aunt Mary, three days ago, to come and fee the last of her poor brother. His time is not yet come, though we are in hourly expectation of it's arrival. Poor old fellow!-he is very quiet and contented, which I am heartily glad of; for fad dog as I am there is to me fomething that makes one feel one can't tell how, at the fight of a room where Death is expected every moment to make his entré. I keep out of the way as much as possible, for fear, if he comes in hafte, he should make an unpleasant mistake, and pop off with me. Aunt cries, and would kifs me if I'd let her, and C.

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and hopes I shall comfort her, and be kind to her, when the is left without her dear Charley-tells me I shall be all the has left; and when I am old enough it will give her great joy to fee me well married. Old enough! and have I lived to the age of fix and twenty, and must wait for a wife, because I am not old enough to know what to do with one! -Lord bless her !- but I verily do believe, if ever there was a genuine old maid in the world, 'tis she; and therefore we must make some allowance, and not expect her to know exactly the number of years people live before they may turn their thoughts towards matrimony. I beg, Ned, you will not think of it thefe twenty years at leaft. I'll ask Eliza's opinion on the subject, when the bleffed moment arrives which will permit me to fee her dear face again. I think I was in love the last letter I wrote you, though nothing, VOL. I. F man;

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man, to what I am at this instantfuch a girl-her every look is constantly before my eyes .- I can hardly regret parting with her-as she managed things fo cunningly, while I was always at her elbow, that I was not quite fure I had conquered, till the morning she winged her way from Matlock. Dear morning !-dear Matlock ! - never shall I forget thee ! - Instead of the smiles she used to meet me with, a soft languor had taken place; and I thought the traces of tears were visible. Vanity, or call it what you will, induced me to place them to my own account-she would not even so much as look at me-a fure fign of love. I was not forry for it, however, as it gave me an opportunity of indulging myself in gazing at her. I never faw so much of her before, as she had a sad trick, till then, of twisting her head directly the other way, if I attempted to examine what colour her

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eves were really of-they are fuch twinkling things, I am not quite certain vet. I shall always have a regard for that mad rattling girl, Lady Caroline Talbot, as the chose feveral opportunities of retaliating upon my charmer for the tricks she had played her when we were to be entertained with a few quality airs, which instead of answering, poor Eliza amused herself with pulling her gloves to pieces. I came in for my share, for daring to admire any thing but herfelf. By the bye she knows how to fay fome devilish keen things, and contrived to make even me look more like a fool than any thing else. As to her aunt, she is going to be married to old Vernon, and I dare fay will lead the dear girl and her fifter a fad life; upon my foul I did nothing but stare and wonder for twenty four hours, when Lady Caroline told me of it, which I believe happened as foon as-

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the knew it herfelf, though at the same time affured me it was a profound fecret, and begged I would only whifper it to every body I met with, as her aunt would expire with blushes and confusion if she thought people knew any thing of the matter .- Now, dear Elliot, fays she, pray make it your own case and spare her. I was afraid of stepping out of my papa Vernon's favor if I did quite as she bid me, so left her to whisper it herself to every body. You must know, by the help of a little masking, I am quite a favorite with the old buck; he thinks me a young fellow that will come to fomething in time, as I don't feem to throw my money away as if it was fo much dirt, nor drink and game like most of our modern striplings; and he hopes I don't run after bad women. Bless him and preserve him from temptation, for telling me I shall be let in if I ring at his gater

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gate—It was good natured of him to give me an invitation, when, if he had eyes, he might have discovered I was perverting the innocent thoughts of his child. He is one of those that don't see a great way beyond their nofe, but is nevertheless a good, harmless, well meaning old fellow, fetting afide his fuperabundance of faving knowledge. What a fool! with his fortune, and two fuch treasures as his lovely daughters, to think of marrying in his old age, and fuch a curfed beldame too. Do you know the old devil spoiled me a new pair of leather breeches. -If it had been a pretty girl, I should not have cared if she had demolished all the cloaths on my back, but for fuch an old hag to fouse one all over with coffee, and then bully like a turkey cock when the had done. Her fine spirited neice helped me out a little, or I believe she would have cuffed me. This affray hap-F 3. pened.

pened just before we all parted. With what transport I put her into her carriage. for Lady Caroline contrived to help me to that honor and happiness; and with what transport did I return to the room which contained my Eliza. 1 fent her father to look at his horses, one of which, I told him, I thought trotted lame. Miss Vernon, who, next to her sister, is one of the fweetest girls in the world, turned her back for a few minutes-I do believe out of pure good nature, and perhaps the thoughts of doing unto others as she would they should do unto her, might come across her mind; let the motive however have been what it would, I am everlaftingly obliged to it. Eliza was fitting on a fopha; I had whispered some foft things in her ear a few minutes before; the feemed perfectly convinced I was advancing to her again for the same purpose, and I suppose thought it was rather too kind not to make an attempt of walking away; when I took effectual care to stop her, by seizing one of the foftest, whitest hands, that ever fell to the share of a woman. She trembled, blushed, and almost ventured to look up to fee who was taking fuch a liberty with her-pardon me, faid I, sweetest Eliza, for the world I would not offend thee; but are we to part like friends never more to meet; if fo, accept my grateful thanks for the blifsful days this last month of my existence has been filled with; I dare not fay half I feel or wish at this moment-may I cherish the hope that Elliot will not quite be banished your remembrance. She opened her coral lips. made an effort to withdraw her hand, and affured me she should be happy to renew our acquaintance at any future time we should chance to meet, and begged I would not entertain an idea fo prejudicial to the fentiments she hoped she possessed, as to imagine her capable of F 4 forgetting

forgetting any of those she considered as friends. And must I bid adieu, cried I. to that form which has dazzled my fight and fenses, till I scarce know how I shall find it possible to live excluded from its prefence, without one ray to chear my prefumption that Eliza ranks me fomething nearer than a common every day friend?-perhaps a time may arrive when the obstacles will be removed which prevent my asking her a question on which all my wishes are suspended; if it encounters a fevere fate, no matter what becomes of Elliot. Indeed Captain Elliot, faid she, I fear I have behaved very wrong. I don't know what to fav, what I ought to fay. Shall I tell you? whifpered I. No, no, faid she, (endeavouring to rife. Well then, faid I, if you can only confider me as the acquaintance of a month, whom you will not run away from should you ever see again, I can only lament that my cruel stars permitted

my straying to Matlock. Oh! Elliot, said she, ask for no more; is not this passive hand a tell tale of the high place you posses in my esteem. I pressed the snowy thing to my lips, and had hardly time to restore it to its beautiful owner ere her sister asked us if we had both been asleep; and in an instant they were summoned away.

I was obliged to offer to conduct Miss Vernon because she was the eldest. She whisked away by herself, and left me to lead her sister, who expressed no dislike to my services. I was just at my wits end. Adieu, whispered I, lovely Eliza! She sighed—I sighed—and both as melancholy as cats, reached the coach. When the ladies were seated, old Vernon shook hands with me, and insisted I would not refuse coming to see the inhabitants of Vernon Place as soon as I could contrive it; told me I should find plenty of sport,

fport, and that he would not expect me to ftay musing in the house with him and the girls. How I got from under the wheels, God knows, for my head was dancing round with extacy. As foon as they were out of fight, Robert and his mafter mounted, and galloped away to Buxton, where your friend Powis, with his mother and fifter, arrived the night before, and had wrote to me to meet them. I thought he looked blank when I told him the Vernons were all off from Matlock. Next day he accompanied me back to my old quarters, where I found aunt's dolorous epistle, which sent me hither, at your fervice as foon as the old gentleman fets off for a better place, and I am welcome to do what I think proper with this.

When do you set out for Wales? I could get very little account of the fair Sophia, as her friends have not been favored

vored with any intelligence from her lately: they wondered at the reason, and affured me the was as amiable and beautiful as unfortunate; and both yow vengeance against your father if ever they should meet with him. You may do as you please about writing to me 'till you get away from Blenheim, as I do not think it will furnish you with any thing worth fending. I hear a stir above -perhaps 'tis all over-I'll ring-No, master's something easier, Sir. There is no great harm in feeling. fo refigned at this approaching exit, as he is quite childish, can hardly see, and is of such an enormous fize that all the men and maids in the house can but just rowl him about; besides being so devilish cross there is nobody likes to go near him that knows how to make an excuse. I am going to knock some rabbits down with an old farmer, who always claims acquaintance with me, and lets me shoot his

his pigeons when I have nothing else to employ myself about. The old codger thinks he shall get more by the living than the dead, I suppose, which makes him so woundy koind. I hear him axing for the Captain—Must not keep the gentleman waiting you know, so, adieu!

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CHARLES ELLIOT.

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LETTER VIII.

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TEIVI VALE.

FOR shame, Arabella!—why what a letter have I received from you? Can you expect one in my situation to have time to be always reading or writing letters?—but you are set down in the country, and really seem to have no idea what is constantly happening to employ us Tasseys of Teivi Vale. Oh! my love! we are as busy as our bees from the glorious rising of the sun till he gently sinks from

from our fight behind the mountains. Is not this charming?—How you envy me! But we will have none of you to disturb our tranquillity. Even Grace is by far too refined for our company: there is not one amongst us who ever heard of fuch a person as Lundari; and if we had I am fure we could not have remembered the gentleman's name half fo well. As to reading newspapers, or any other paper, we dont pretend to it; fome of us can manage to follow the parfon, on a funday, through the pfalms, in our own book. He is a very learned man, and can read writing, and all the hard names in the bible, as well as the gardener, I promise you. He is acquainted with all the fecrets in the parish. All our letters are carried to him unopened. I have stepped into a little practice myself in this way, and have not only the honor of decyphering for my good friend Winny ap Shinken, but she has

has also appointed me her amanuensis. I affure you I hear a prodigious deal of what people are doing in the beau monde. Her grandaughter is at a fine fervice in London, where she has tenpounds a year, besides cast off clothes and vails, and is just come in for a fine dress made with capes, and puttons, and pelts. This important intelligence found its way to Teivi Vale last night, and was accompanied by a strange story of some great Lady from beyond fea that was at their house, and who was crying from morning till night, and would not fee her husband, who is a fine gentleman; and that she had given her a couple of guineas to try and get her away, and had asked her if she had any friends in the country that would take her as a lodger; she did not care where, if it was a great. way from London; and this made her write again fo foon, as she thought it. might be of service to her grandmother,

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if she should like to let her come and live with her. She was one of the handsomest, best naturedest, and freest ladies that ever walked the ground; and would give her no trouble, as she never hardly eat any victuals, and dared to say would pay very handsomely, as she had seen her purse lying on the table brim full of gold; begged her grandmother would get the young woman who is so kind as to write for her to send her an answer as soon as possible: intends sending two pair of blue yarn stockings and a pound of tea by Madam Mortimer, if so be as she is to come.

This is a literal translation.—What is your opinion of the poor crying thing Jenny ap Shinken is going to give me for a neighbour? I'll tell you mine. I am afraid Jenny's fine place is no better, if quite fo good, as it should be; and Madam Mortimer is some unhappy girl, who has been lured into the flow'ry paths

of vice, but still retains a wish to return to virtue: perhaps deserted by the despoiler of her once spotless fame, and left to the mercy of one of those detestable beings who make a trade of unprotected innocence and beauty. You can't think what a fuss it has put me in; for she is to come if so be as she pleases, and as foon as she pleases, by my advice. I not only wrote a very friendly letter to Jenny, containing a little wife counfel, but inclosed one to Madam Mortimer herself, wherein I affured her she would meet with every comfort and attention in Goody ap Shinken's cottage that the owner could procure. I feared she would think the situation too retired; but if she was fond of the country she must admire Teivi Vale, as it was a sweet, romantic spot. I shall be at her intended habitation all day to-morrow; as Winny, tho one of the best creatures in the world, has thewn no great taste in the furniture of her

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her villa, and I must try if I can't help her to make a more modern appearance against the arrival of her guest. I am certain I shall not foil my fingers in difplacing the wooden bowls, as she 'never rests till she finds it impossible to make them whiter. Her spare apartment too will be quite an undertaking; not a table or looking glass, and but one chair in it; no window curtain, tho' that will be of little consequence unless I have interest fufficient to procure her confent to demolish a little of the creeping ivy, which has entwined itself into so thick a shade before it that Madam Mortimer will never know whether its morn or midnight. The bed she is to occupy is of Winny's own spinning, and her geefe presented her with the feathers. She is fure his worship the King need not wish for a fofter or more comfortable bed than he would find at her house, and he shall be heartily welcome to it if ever he comes this way.

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My mother goes to market, where she tells me all kind of things are to be had for money. I shall commission her to purchase the fundries wanted at Ap Shinken Hall. I must likewise prevail with the lady of that mansion to make some alteration in the cooking department, as her intended companion may not like her mutton with brown fugar fprinkled over it, which Winny is strongly attached to-I forgot, she does not eat any victuals: yet who knows how far my powers of perfualion may go in attempting to make her give up this airy mode of existence. Do you know I feel quite interested about her? There is fomething in Jenny's tale which has made me her friend; and if she deserves the character given of her, I shall, while I lament her fall, (if it is as I think) thank Heaven for fending me fuch a bleffing as. her fociety.

I should

I should not have entertained quite for decided an idea of the cause which induces a young woman of her description to fly from the world, had not Jenny often mentioned that her mistress was a very fine lady, and had no end of grand gentlemen always visiting her; but she did not hear of her going to be married to any of them, tho' they were always fetching her to the play and opera, and coming home with her at night, and fometimes flaying fupper with her and her aunt, whom she lives with. All this never struck me 'till she talks of a young lady, who is obliged to bribe a fervant to affift her out of the house, and who is married to a man she will not admit into her presence. No doubt she has sufficient reason to abhor the fight of him-be mine the talk to make her forget she ever erred, and to reconcile her to herfelf. The step she is going to take shews she wants not strengthening in her intention. 0

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of forfaking a life of dishonour. A female in the bloom of youth, and handsome too, (if Jenny's word is to be taken)
would find libertines enough to support
her in a state of pleasure and affluence
while these last. What must I say to
her?—that crimes sincerely repented of
on earth are no more remembered in
Heaven! and that she has caused more
rejoicings in the celestral regions, than
ninety nine of her harmless sisters who
never went astray.

Could you have imagined, my dearest Arabella, that I should have found it possible to have filled a sheet and a half of paper without taking the smallest notice of one line in your everlasting budget?—I am obliged to you for this term, or I should really have been at a loss what to have called it. What was it all about?—Oh, you are vastly obliged to me for a letter, I remember directing to Vernon

Vernon Place, and polite enough to tell me vou don't believe a word in it. Well then, take it again in black and white; I am happy !-what would the girl have? -- is there a being on earth who need wish for more than to be able to fay this? What is to make me otherwise?—the loss of riches that belongs not to me, or the loss of friends which accompanied them?-besides a little army of mercenary wretches who dangled after me wherever I went, and vowed I was the divinest creature they ever faw, without even taking the trouble of looking at me; blamed fortune for being fo bountiful where nature had been fo profuse, and wished only for an opportunity of evinc-

Poor Sir Frederic!—gone to Italy is he?—what a fortunate thing for me not

ing the fincerity and ardor of their passions. I always told them how it would be, tho' at the time I neither expected nor wished to see them put to the trial.

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ot to to have fet my heart on this king of diamonds. And can you wish me to force myfelf on a world which will most probably turn its back upon me? The case you charge me with is a false bill, as it appears I relinquished every heart in my possession as soon as I received poverty's mandate to become one of her children. What could induce you to ask if we were never to meet more?-can I tell?-it depends entirely on yourself-for tho' the mountains can't move to you, I shall not entirely give up the hope that you will one day come to the mountains. With what joy shall I climb their craggy fides, conduct you fafe along the ridges, and descend with you into our vale, which when you have feen you will not call a dreary spot. But no more of self-I am tired of the subject, and so perhaps is my friend. Only think of not wishing you joy on the bleffing your father is preparing for you. My pity is imploredplored—take it, my sweet girl, and we will leave joy out of the question. I know of no beings more deserving the former, than two young women who never experienced, or I believe wanted, controul, that are going to have a mother in law, and such a one as you describe, and indeed as I have heard others depicture in the same unfavorable colours.

You know I was once at Bath with Sir William Milbanke: now if there are any thoughts that give me pain, and which I have not prevailed with to fleep for ever, I have touched the chord which leads directly to them—Forgive this to to the memory of my benefactor, on known only by the name of parent; never will my heart acknowledge any other—dearest, best of men! Oh! my Arabella! you could not wish me to forget him! Believe me, when I mourn he is the only cause, and had I still retained the

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the possessions he left me mistress of, I should never have been without this fource for forrow .-- I will go on prefently-there-'tis over. At Bath then I heard much of Lady Betty Cranwell, She had just left it, and every body who had feen her was ready to laugh at the found of her name. But why, my dear, are you to sprinkle your spleen over all the old unmarried women in the world, and even poor helpless widows, because you are likely to have the benefit of one of the former to help you up the short hill her ladyship talks about? Tell her, if she will give you leave you will spare asher that trouble, and in return for her or condescension will assist her to get down to the bottom, with rather more credit to her head and heart than she has either fnewn in her ascent or descent; and that you do not know the fummit she can possibly mean, unless it's that of folly, which you fincerely hope she is arrived VOL. J. at.

at. I have no patience with her tirefome nonfense to you, and but a small
degree with the young man who is so
blind to his own happiness, as to think
of transplanting her into his family.—
Fye—fye—my dear Mr. Vernon; indeed
you are wrong, Sir—and so I fear you
will discover long before half the sweet
honey moon is past.

What must I say to my offended Eliza? I am exceeding glad however I did not write to her. I have nothing to say to fine ladies who give encouragement to gay young officers and make them fall in love. Pretty fellows indeed to protect the nation, without such a necessary thing as a stout heart. I thought she had been a more loyal subject than to have ruined the defenders of her country; for the poor man is gone past redemption, and I fear Eliza not far behind him. I am very angry with her, and know of nothing that

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that will be fo great a punishment as being fet down in a house of her own, with Elliot close by her fide. I will not wafte time in imagining how this is to be effected, lest the difficulties which may arise should make the sweet girl ferious. There are few requests she can make, which her father does not take pleasure in complying with, and I hope he will never deny his confent, when Captain Elliot begs for one of his daughters and a few of his pounds. I think he will part with one for the sake of getting rid of the other. A faucy chit, to think of taking him to talk for only chusing to marry, if he likes it. I don't know whether it will not be in Eliza's favour; for I apprehend she and her intended relation will not be able to live many months in the fame house, and am in hopes the master of it will be glad to give her to any body that will accept her. As to the other personage, she is his for better

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better or worse, and there's no remedy. But what must become of my other friend, my Arabella? I had better stop my pen I believe, as she has been, like her sister, a little soolish.

Lady Caroline made me laugh, as often as she spoke. What pity it is Lady Guilford had not delivered her dying bequest to some other than her sister; one more worthy fuch a truft, who had poffessed abilities and inclination to have instilled proper principles into her charge: the has great quickness of ideas; which might have been turned to good account, had they been blended with a propenfity to think fometimes, and aknowledge that there is much delicacy and some reserve necessary to constitute the character of an amiable female. I infift on your making her come to Vernon Place, and trying whether the bias of her mind can possibly be reversed. I know no one more y.

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more equal to such a task than Arabella. Leave her all her playfulness, but make her know she should sometimes think before she speaks.

You aftonish me by faying I am still a topic for conversation. I thought I must have been obliterated from their recollection. Sure the times grow bar-, ren of adventures, not to have afforded the multitude another to wonder at. I am exceedingly obliged to your brother Elliot, for his very particular enquiries, and defire you will tell him that I am happy enough, and that I spend my time I cannot tell how; fometimes I read to my mother, who is far from being inhuman, I affure you; she means every thing she does for the best, and treats me with the greatest kindness: is good natured, inoffensive, and very handsome too, for the still retains her pure red and white. I have no eye to vanity when I

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fay

fay we are certainly not unlike each other. tho' the advantage is abundantly on her fide. I fincerely believe the was not confulted when her child was delivered up to another. She fays nothing on the fubject; and her anxious looks, for fear I should not have every thing I wish, now fate has returned me to her, quite filences reproach. Could you but witness the tears which often fream when the looks at me, as I turn my spinning wheel, you would forget, forgive, and love her, as I do. I can't fay quite fo much for my other parent, and am extremely rejoiced I fee little of him; he spends all his days, and often nights, at the mill; he is rough and morose by nature, and very little indebted to art. Nor is his external less grotefque. I really shudder at the fight of him. In vain have I endeavoured to get the better of the antipathy his appearance infpires me with. It rather strengthens on acquaintance; nor do I believe

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believe the fight of me is much more grateful to his eyes: when we meet he gets off as fast as possible, and seldom favours me with more of his conversation than, so child.

But what is all this to Mr. Elliot. Mind you are not to tell it him-only the spinning part—as that will give him a little further knowledge of what I do with my time. Mrs. ap Shinken is one of the greatest proficients at a spinning wheel in the vale, and has devoted many hours to my improvement in this branch of useful knowledge, with but little success, I am forry to fay; tho' a wish to excell has not been wanting, I affure you, as I am fond of the employment, and think it rather a more natural one for the daughter of a miller, than drawing, or that fweet harmonizer of the foul, music; neither of which can I yet persuade myfelf to forsake. I enclose a sketch of our G 4 church.

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church, with Winny's cott, a little to the left, and hills rifing above hills behind. The odd figure on the little bridge is Winny herfelf, in her funday fuit. Be merciful to her, I beg. I have faid she abounds not with taste; her hat too is, I think, of the parachute kind, and of sufficient magnitude you will allow; but large hats are most likely as unfashionable by this time as any thing she could have put on: something new, and perhaps more ridiculous, has ended their reign.

What joy it gives me to hear the next possession of Blenheim is likely to be as worthy as the last. May he be as happy as I wish him! Yes, my love! without palpitation I read the revered name of Milbanke. Religion, that blessed soother of the soul, (if we but pay a due attention to its callings,) kindly assisted me in banishing the sad thoughts that were too near overcoming me, and forbad my suffering

fuffering the viciffitudes of this uncertain life to have too much weight in my mind. Reason also lent an helping hand. thankfully bowed to their dictates, and find myself not deceived by their promises. I am looking for a letter from you, and shall read the event of your father's Londen trip with tears in my eyes. May fomething start to prevent its final conclusion!

Many thanks to my friend and favourite, Grace, for her dutiful remembrances, besides love and a number of good wishes. Azor is in high health, and prodigiously fond of a young kitten which is an inmate of his. He never fuffers the poor thing to walk; but takes her in his mouth, and carries her the moment she attempts stirring. I am fometimes obliged to interpose, but often in vain. The chard (agnilles et cz. mission the fad thoughts that option

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I shall send you speedy information of the arrival of my new friend. Adieu! Will you give credit to my pen, when it assures you nothing can be more unchangeable than the gratitude and love of

Your

SOPHIA.

LETTER

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MISS VERNON

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SOPHIA.

VERNON PLACE.

WHEN will you give over making me think I love and admire you sufficiently, my dearest Sophia? I really shall take an aversion to my sweet self, if you do not stop. Tis not in nature to bear such excellence in another with common patience. I have a great mind to beg you will write to me no more; only that Madam Mortimer runs in my head. Now don't you forget one word

word the tells you, for I shall expect it all verbatim. I am in some trepidation too about Jenny, for fear your wife counsel should be too late. Her grandmother is in truth the strangest looking shentlewoman I ever faw walking over a bridge. You must favor us with a caricature of her at her spinning wheel. Oh! my fair artist! what a delightful scene have you prefented us with! Come to you?-That I will as foon as another fummer arrives: nor would I wait for that, did not necessity lay its compulsive hand on me.

And can your Teivi Vale be really the Paradife you have painted? I have fuch a charming scheme, if I don't meet with any barriers in my way too high to ftep over. Here it is, my love. When Eliza and Elliot are married, and my father is tired to death of the squabbling which will frequently happen between his Lady and

and remaining daughter, I shall persuade him to let me make visits to all my friends, in hopes things may go on more peaceably when I return. Then I shall fpend fome time with Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, and I cannot tell exactly how much with you; but, if we agree tolerably, you will not easily get rid of my company. I shall be at Winny's, and you must come there too; and if she has but one-spare apartment, we will have a little tent before the door, large enough for us both. You must contrive it; and your mother can furnish it from market. You may laugh, my dear; but I promife you I never was more ferious in my life. I should not think of taking up my abode at Winny's, but that horrid man, I cannot believe him your father, (no offence, I hope, Sophia; indeed I have my fuspicions) permit me to hate him most fincerely. Your mother is a little, tho' very little, crept into favor; Line

we shall never be cordial, I know. As I was faying, then, the fight of this man would put me in fuch a rage, I don't know what would be the confequence; and to avoid the rencontre I must take shelter with Winny; so I hope you will pardon my coming to Teivi Vale, and not on a visit to you. Now you must not suppose all this is without meaning. I promise and vow the thing shall come to pass: for if it cannot be accomplished with leave, positively I will manage it without, fomehow or other. You need not fet up for a climber, Sophia; I shall contrive to tumble into the valley fans your assistance. Are you fure you have copied from nature? I am almost intimidated when I look at those tremendous hanging hills behind the church. However if you will but shew yourself at the bottom, I shall soon be with you. I am revelling in imagination at the joy I shall feel when this project comes to maturity.

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Pray beg Winny to remember I must infist on eating my mutton without treacle sauce, and will excuse brown sugar. I long for the time when this is to happen.

Such doings at Vernon Place? Ringing, open house, and rejoicing, cards, compliments and visiting-oh! what a charming thing's a wedding!-When will my time come? The beauteous bride, in white array, (emblem of her spotless purity) so obliging and kind to every body.! If it does but last! Peopeople are apt (if ever) you know, to be good humoured when they are pleafed; and the feems inexpressibly transported. My father looks half ashamed at what he has done, and almost hangs his head while his friends are wishing him joy. Well he may; for there are few of them that can do it without fmiling; and some go farther; poor man, such a piece of work about him for fear he should catch

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136 BLENHEIM LODGE.

earch cold. So many loves and dears, every creature that enters the fame room with them is obliged to bite their lips till the tears come.

We have got Lady Caroline with us for a few days, who feems in a buftle to take her leave; vows the antique turtles have quite surfeited her with love; she dont believe she shall ever bear the name of it again. Where do you think she is bound for when we lofe her company? Blenheim Lodge! Miss Harriet Milbanke is her chere amie. They felected each other at Queen's Square, I remember, where Lady Caroline came for a few months She was foon tired of the confinement, and chose to leave it. You must excuse me; I can't possibly attempt making the leopard spotless, or the Æthiopian a fair complexion. She might, I dare say, have been a different being, but an alteration now would be fruitless

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to attempt. Delicacy and referve-you shall hear how much she wants of those ingredients alone: yesterday the Cathcarts dined here, and brought a decent, but rather a puppyish kind of young man, who is staying with them, from Cambridge. He was much noticed by ber Ladyship, who desired him to come and fit down by her. As foon as he had fcraped and bowed to us all, this amply powdered, frized and curled youth was called over by the name of Stanley, and was scarcely seated by his fair neighbour before he was accosted with-I hope, Stanley, you are fond of dancing, as Mr. Vernon gives a ball on friday, in honour of the day that bleffed him with the hand of that young lady (pointing to poor Lady Betty, who began to bridle and fuss for fear we were going to have some entertainment at her expence). Mr. Stanley declared he was an everlasting dancer, and expressed much plea-

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to

fore at her Ladyship's information. Well, continued she, that's a fortunate circumstance for we shall be in terrible distress for partners. Oh! a lucky thought has just favoured me: now can't you, my dear Stanley, write to Cambridge for fome men, as there does not feem to be above half a dozen in this whole county, and we must slice them out I believe for the ladies, unless you can affift us. Will your ladyship, said my father, be so kind to tell me where this ball is to be, you are talking about? Lord bless me, my dear Mr. Vernon, what a question? Why in this room to be fure, unless there is a larger in the house; though I think we can stand sixteen couple very commodioully. A fummons to the dinner parlour stopped her; and when we reached it, her dear Stanley squeezed himself next to her at table. What they talked about I did not attend to, but heard a great tone will benness segment and todeal

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She appointed him to ride with her this morning. Eliza is of the party. I went into the stable yard to see them mount. Her ladyship contrived, when Mr. Stanley had fet her on her horse, to flip off into his arms. Her cloaths caught to fomething on the faddle, and a capital exhibition of legs was displayed. My dear Lady Caroline! faid I, for heaven's fake permit me to affift you. My God! Miss Vernon, don't blush about it; if Stanley never faw a pair of handsome legs before, why this is the first time, and he is very much obliged to me I think, tho' tis more than he deferves for giving me fuch a fright. Eliza defired the would try once more if the could not fucceed in a tumble, as Mr. Stanley could not possibly go unless the other side of his hair was deranged. The poor beau

beau was in agonies at this remark, but attempted to laugh it off, and away they went.

and kings the aid tag in terms orders

So much for Lady Caroline's referve and delicacy. Upon my word she is too bad. What offer do you think she made my father the other day? why standing sponfor to his first little boy: and begg'd he would have him named Carlo, as it could not be Caroline, after his godmama; there was a fimilitude in the found, and the should take it as an high compliment; declared the really felt quite an affection for the fweet fellow; and hoped I would be valtly fond of my young brother, or the would not keep up the flightest acquaintance with me: then informed us what drefs she should appear in at the christening, and concluded with patting my father's hand, and defiring he would be extremely careful of her aunt, and not deny her a bit of chin, or nofe,

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or ear, if she should wish to taste either, as ladies sometimes had very outré sancies. I shall be sorry when she is gone, as she keeps the old cat in some order, and helps us to a laugh at all times. I suppose she is going to see what she can make of Mr. Milbanke. He is a divine sellow, she hears.

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letter from our uncle, aunt and cousins, down in the North. They repeat their wishes to be favoured with a visit from cousin Arabella and Cousin Eliza; the two former think it is time the young folks should meet and see how they like each other; and their's are too young to leave home yet; so hope, now their brother has got an agreeable companion, they shall see us at Rushmead. I should like it prodigiously if I could but prevail with Cousin Eliza; but she is slying to the windows if the trampling of horses or sounding

founding of carriages greet her ears, in hopes Elliot has remembered his promife. A month has elapfed. Sure he has not forgot us in this short time? 1 begin to have my doubts. Oh, man! when wilt thou cease to deceive-and oh, woman I when wilt thou ceafe to believe !--never !--never !--never !-did think this Elliot seemed to have the truth in him: tho' I believe I must give up judging from appearances. Even you may be a fad hypocrite; and perhaps while I am flattered with the idea that you are passing your time in contentment, it may be all a fiction of your own, invented to perfuade one you posfefs that ease of heart to which I fear you are a stranger. I know reason and religion are necessary to be attended to: the one places us above the brutes in this world; the other will make us fit company for angels in the next. Your letter almost frightened me. I tried to think myfelf

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myself in Teivi Vale; my companions, those only of my Sophia's. It would not do. I hardly dare tell you how wretched I should be. Few, my friend, would encounter the stern frowns of adversity like you; and instead of supporting such a reverse of sate with patience and resolution, would perpetually bewail their hard lot with unavailing tears; lament the hour they entered into existence; and sigh the remnant of their days away.

has been simble on battle sold and got

Spinning! and were those hands formed for such service employment? My feelings are wounded at the idea more than I can express. I shewed your inimitable landscape to Lady Caroline, but concealed the name of the artist. She paints very prettily herself. Indeed it is the only thing like employment I ever saw her attempt. Caricature she is also fond of, and is really excellent in this line. She has presented my father with

with his Lady in all humours and dreffes, and defired to know which he gave the preference to, as the did not doubt but Lady Betty Vernon would be most happy always to wear the refemblance which would find favour in the eyes of her fupreme lord and mafter. She thinks the defigner of the small piece I gave her a fight of, must possess true ideas of the picturesque; but still it is not her forte; and tho' she should not be alone in setting up for a connoisseur without an atom of tafte, yet she cannot politively give a verdict on the performance. Is fure my friend must be a clever kind of girl; and gives her credit for the old man or woman on the bridge, (she can't exactly determine the fex of the person;) concludes the figure is original, as the never could have met with fuch a queer looking thing in life, tho' fome wonderful phænomenons now and then present themselves.

Let me have early notice of the arrival of the weeping fair. I am prepared for fomething wonderful, yet cannot be violently her friend till I hear what she has to fay for herself. A naughty girl! I fear she has been playing with fire, and cries because she has burnt her fingers: Tell Azor I do not bear malice, and heartily forgive the fnap he gave my cheek, tho' the mark still remains. I shall certainly never take the liberty of brushing a wasp from the apron of his fair mistress in his presence, should we ever again be sitting together under a shady oak. Eliza takes the pen, and infifts I shall not write one word more.

Adieu.

Vol. 1.

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Miss

MISS ELIZA VERNON IN CONTINUATION.

Very fine, nay quite great, I declare, Arabella. And is this all the produce of your own brain? I believe I had better take my leave, my dear Sophia, and let Ann try whether she can humanize my head, which that uncivil fellow Boreas has puffed into rather a questionable shape. But to read fuch a parcel of vile infinuations about one's own particular felf, and let them reach you without attempting a vindication, would add confirmation to the whole. I did think of giving up your acquaintance, as you must be convinced such a step does not want provocation; tho' perhaps that artful fifter of mine may be the occasion of your

your bad behaviour. Am I well used? Never to write one line to me; and to receive all the scandalous tittle tattle you can lay your hands on against me, every word of which is the sheer invention of your informer. I in love!-How dare you give credit to the affertion?—the thought drives me mad? Ridiculous! I running to the windows in quest of a man who is, perhaps, at this very moment upon his knees to another! Dear me! I dare fay he is married, and that is the reason he has been so rude to my father. Is it not extremely uncivil, neither to come, nor give a reason for staying away? Such treatment is not to be born with patience. Oh, Elliot! if your perjury should kill the foolish, fond, believing maid you took some pains to deceive, ere she entrusted thee with the half confession of her love, depend upon it she will give thee three calls some even-

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ing about twelve, a la Margaret, and a hearty shake into the bargain.

Now what must I talk about next? Arabella has spared nothing for me; and there feems to remain but this, fincerely subscribing to all her love and admiration. You are a good girl, without doubt; and have fet my curiofity upon the stretch for your incognita's appearance in Wales. I am dying myfelf to fee the charming ap Shinken. Expect me next fummer. Arabella may do as she pleases; I come, I give you my word and honor, if it is only to spoil her fine scheme. Marry me indeed! and then run I can't tell how many hundred miles away, and leave me to be cuffed about by a husband, and not one creature to protect ne!-What a merciles idea! As I live, mama croffing the lawn in her veil, fair foul; and young as fair, and amiable amiable as young. Wou'd I had never feen thee! Do look at her: she is quite captivating.-Not a bit of face to be feen-What an elegant figure?-Now she really is not amiss, veiled almost from head to foot, and at this diffance. I must listen to the gentle found, as fomething like Miss Eliza issues from her fpacious mouth :- begs to know whether I mean to appear at dinner; because she apprehends a little alteration of dress will be necessary, and she thinks a quarter of an hour will hardly be fufficient. There is some truth in that to be sure. I know Lady Caroline will not be half armed for her admirer Stanley's compleat destruction, who is to drink tea here. He is aftonishly thunderstruck with being honoured with the notice of a Lady: had she been Miss Talbot, he might have escaped. But his fate is inevitable. I do think if I had broke my neck this H 3 morning,

morning, he would not have stopped to pick me up. His whole foul was devoted to her Ladyship. Oh, how the sound of a title animates this animal! He pranced and capered about fo violently, I was glad when we got home, as every body was in danger near him, except Lady Caroline. No eyes but for her. I am not fure she is not laughing at him, and has started him for an object of ridicule; as she has fet him about making her a muff for the winter; which pretty kind of masculine employment he is vaftly fond of, and professes to have fome little taste in, if the words of our fex are to be taken, for whom he has had the honor of making feveral; tho he fears, thinking of the beautiful wearer of his next attempt will prevent his fucceeding as he wishes in the one her Ladyship has promised him the felicity of accepting. Must not I be more than woman,

woman, to hear all this addressed to another without feeling one spark of envy on the occasion. Good by—Good by—What will become of me? Here, Arabella, sign and seal with pleasure, my dear. I am apt to think Sophia will be glad to see the name of her

ARABELLA VERNON.

H4 LETTER

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LETTER X.

EDWARD MILBANKE Esq.

T O

CHARLES ELLIOT, Esq.

BLENHEIM LODGE.

I GIVE you joy, Charles! The first piece of good news I met with in the paper last night, was the name of Charles Elliot at the head of the defunct list. I should not have known you were the perfon mentioned, only his real and personal estate was talked of. I hope he has done the genteel thing by you, and then you may marry for all Mrs. Mary's objections, and do an hundred and fifty other

other foolish things if you like. But be you ever so ridiculous, I shall be before hand with you. Pray laugh, Elliot. I desire you will. No ceremony, I beg. Can you guess what I have surrendered my liberty to?-Not flesh and blood, I affure you: and yet if ever man could be faid to love, tis the case with Milbanke. A week fince, passing by Fanny's bedchamber, the door of which stood open, my eyes were attracted by a portrait which hung over the chimney. I advanced to the almost speaking canvas. It represented a female form; the head rather reclined; a pair of the sweetest blue eyes were directed to a book placed on a flab on one fide; a transporting tho' rather plaintive fmile played on its bewitching countenance; fuch a complexion, there was no telling where the lilly ended or the rose began, each were so delicately blended. How long I should have gazed remains a doubt, if the oc-H 5 cupier

cupier of the apartment had not entered, and stealing softly behind me, whispered, what is my good brother thinking of? I caught her hand:—Dear Fanny, do tell me if this is a friend of yours? No, was all the answer. Did you ever see the original? Yes. Who is it? I must know directly. Hush—my father's on the stairs—follow me into the garden. We stole off like a couple of thieves.

As foon as we arrived in a place of fafety, she begged I would not for the world hint I had seen the picture. She found me so absorbed in contemplation, that she said I must never see it again; and she should have taken care to have secured her chamber, had she thought of my paying it a visit. By this time I guessed the lovely Sophia must be the person this painting was designed for; but that my father should permit her resemblance to find a place in his house,

was rather wonderful. I told Fanny she might spare herself the trouble of informing me I had beheld the likeness of the beauteous girl who once reigned mistress of Blenheim's domains: all I wanted to know was how it came into her possession. Indeed, Edward, you are perfectly right as to the person, said she; but what fignifies how I came by it : very honestly, I promise you. Bless my heart I believe you have fallen in love with the lifeless thing.—Sure you won't be foolish enough to marry it. Come, come, cried I, no trifling; I want to hear where you picked this picture up, and then I have a few more questions to ask. Will you promise, brother, to be very filent, and I'll venture to tell you. One morning I went to carry fome flowers into the library, over the door of which this object of your attention was placed, and where I had often taken pleasure in viewing it, when just as I was. departing.

departing, a fervant entered with a ladder, and took down the sweet creature I was directing my eyes to. My father now made his appearance, and ordered a fire: dear Sir, faid I, are you ill? No, child; how, came that into your head? Why because I hear you talk of a fire this warm morning. Oh, yes, I am going to warm this dainty young lady a little: fetch your scissars and unframe her for me. Oh pray, dear Sir! let me entreat you not to destroy such a delightful painting. The painting is very fine, as you observe; but that will not save it from the flames, I promise you. I knelt, wept, and at last gained my cause, on condition I never let him fee it more, and carefully kept it concealed from you when you came home. I never left my room unlocked till to-day, and fee what has happened?

I set her heart at rest by promising inviolable secrecy. My next enquiries were,

the authorization and the

were, whether the picture I had feen was a likeness, or whether any thing so divinely fair could have a living parallel? Indeed brother it is barely doing Sophia justice to say her picture is a true copy: to draw her as she is can hardly be accomplished; indeed she far surpasses what you have seen; I never beheld such a woman before; her person is really dazzling; how could my father see her and not love her! Quite enough, my kind Fanny, said I; no more of her for God's sake; you'll drive me mad; do you think I am composed of slint and steel?

The murder is out, Charles; and go over all the mountains in Wales I certainly will ere long, till I find this Sophia. In the mean time, I have some intention of finding my way into Yorkshire, if you are not going to run after Eliza Vernon.

Vernon. You have her fafe enough: and I would not have you in too great a hurry about marrying, tho' you must have the girl, after all that fine stuff you fent her home with her head filled with. I am no friend to trifling with pretty girls; as I believe many a woman has been made wretched by this kind of amusement. I do not find Blenheim that devilish dreary place you talk of: here is an excellent old fellow who gives us very good things every Sunday out of the pulpit. I half live with him: we play at chess together, siddle together, and read together. He, too, can talk of nothing elfe but his amiable, worthy young friend. She feems to have found out the way of persuading every body to think her an angel. I am in hopes he knows where to direct me to find her : and I only want fomebody to tell me what I am to do when I have succeeded

fo far. I can't possibly contrive in what manner to approach this radiant, dazzling being. I must not say tis a Milbanke; she'll have nothing to say to me then. Upon my word, Elliot, turning fool is worse than wearing my hair in buckle; is it not? So far from giving up your acquaintance, I am more sit for it than ever.

Harriet tells me the identical Lady Caroline you gave such an high character of, is a friend of her's, and coming to-morrow on a visit here. Poor Harriet picked her up at school. I am afraid this girl's heart is not in the right place: she seems not unlike her friend; no small share of levity about her when mama's not in the way, and at times it can't be restrained even then: I don't know what will become of her. Let me know where Powis is to be heard of: I want

160 BLENHEIM LODGE.

to write to him: he is hardly still at Buxton.

Adieu!

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Your's,

EDWARD MILBANKE.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

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MISS VERNON

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TEIVI VALE.

What kind of humour are you in, my dear Arabella? you must not read the first part of my letter, I believe, as it will make you melancholy if you are grave, and grave if you are gay. A sad story indeed has my new acquaintance surnished me with. We have been almost constant companions near a week. I assisted Winny in receiving her. It was scarce daylight when she

the reached the end of her tedious journey; harraffed with fatigue; tottering, and unable to enter her folitary dwelling without help; e'er we could place her in a chair she fainted. Poor Winny was too much frightened to afford any assistance; and as I was unable myself to support the unhappy stranger, she funk, pale and breathless, on the cold My endeavours to restore her bricks. to life were fo long ineffectual, I began to be alarmed; at last, a pair of lovely, languid, dark eyes opened, and cast around a look of wild infensibility. I poured a little water down her throat, which revived her much, and reason began to refume her feat. She thanked us as foon as the was able to articulate, for our kind usage to a stranger, but thought, if we knew the wretched state of the loft, for ever loft being, we had restored to existence, we furely could not have been fo cruel to her as to wish

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her any thing but a grave. Come, come, (cried Winny,) don't be cast down; here is this good hearted young creature has been in a peck of troubles as well as you; and she'll tell you all about it presently; and that I hope will divert you from thinking of your own confarns; tho' she knows how to discourse with such a grand person better than I do, and if it was not for her you'd have a fad moping time here. She smiled, but it was the smile of woe. Indeed, faid she, I can hardly think myfelf awake; where did you come from? addressing herself to me; are you really an inhabitant of this lonely place? No, cried Winny, she lives hard by, with one Richard Llewellyn, who they fay is her father; but for my part I don't believe a word on't, thof to be fure I came here not above ten years agone, and the thing was done before that Now, faid I, my good

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good Winny, make a nice blazing fire, and warm the bed this lady is to fleep in; and if she will give me leave to undress her, we will put her into it, as she wants rest I am fure; and then you shall carry her some whey. Marcy on you, why did not you hear me fay I had not made any cheese this month. Do as you are bid, cried I-I can make whey without making cheefe. I then took off a white beaver hat from the head of Jenny's Mrs. Mortimer. She laid hold of my hand; looked at it; and then at my face, and burst into " Sure," faid fhe, " you must tears. " be an angel! oh yes! I know you " are! will you be so kind to intreat " for me: I want to be in Heaven; but how to get there, that's the "thing! Once indeed, do you know-" but that was before I faw him-yes, ves, that was one day when my fa-" ther-but do make haste, my hair " won't won't be dreffed time enough for the ball; it begins at eight o'clock." Geminy, said Winny, she is quite rambling, and can't tell what she is talking about, for fartain. I felt her head; it was hot as fire; we put her to bed, gave her some weak whey, and she fell into a sound sleep. I fent Winny to bed, and took my station in a large old fashioned chair, which was her grandmother's, and a very comfortable one it is, I assure you.

It was near eight o'clock in the morning before the poor unfortunate awaked. Winny and I had breakfasted, and were waiting in the room ready to attend her. She was much refreshed; and had no remains of a fever. Her delirium was intirely off; and succeeded by a calm deep dejection. She seemed at first hardly to remember us; but presently recollected me, and made many apolo-

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gies for the trouble she had given. I said every thing I could to soothe her, and told her I would never visit her again, if she repaid my trouble with mentioning it. I even prevailed with her to eat some breakfast. Indeed she was so complying there was little persuasion necessary to induce her to sollow my advice.

Winny left us, to go to market with my mother, who came to fee what was become of me. After they were gone, my new friend told me I must leave her; she was unworthy the care of the good and innocent;—she had flown from sin;—Heaven had been most kind and merciful in permitting her to escape further pollution, and in protecting her to a place where she hoped, ere long, to resign her life. And can you, said I, think this wish an acceptable return to that gracious Being who has given given you the power to atone for every error you have been guilty of, by living, I hope, many years penitent and blameless? Oh! said she, I dare not pray. Such a wretch cannot hope for pardon. Alas! perhaps a murdered father's manes call for vengeance on my hapless head. You who are thus kindly interested for a miserable outcast, say, can I dare look up for mercy? Indeed, faid I, I cannot think you have really been acceffary to fuch a deed of horror. Ah! where's the difference between breaking the heart of a parent, or planting a dagger in it. Death, you know, must succeed to either. I took her hand, and told her, I hoped, when the was sufficiently recovered from the fatigue of mind and body she had so recently undergone, she would think me worthy her confidence; perhaps a sympathizer in her forrows might help to alleviate the weight of them. And do I deserve to meet with fuch

fuch a friend as thee? Oh! where but here could I have found one? Heaven, I thank thee for raising me up this benign, this gentle wooer to peace.-Yes, my fweet monitor, every unworthy action of my life shall be submitted to thee. Indeed I have been most vile, and bitter must be my thoughts whenever I venture to recall my fad mifdoings to my remembrance. But my crimes have met with punishment. Had not my sinful career been interrupted by a stroke which no time can ever make appear less dreadful than at this moment, I should still have followed vice as I had done before, with trembling steps.

She wished to commence the sad story she had promised me, and said, she was quite able to give it me. However I took her into Winny's garden, and institted she should not speak of past events at present; and I hoped she would endeayour

deavour to think of them as little as possible. She shook her head; called me a friend indeed; and asked my pardon for thinking some mystery, and she feared, misfortune, must occasion her finding fuch a companion in fuch a place-To divert her, as Winny fays, I cleared the mystery she apprehended. It intirely drew her from herself. She seemed not to remember a forrow of her own, and displayed a heart easily melted at a tale of distress. When I had finished, she wiped her eyes, fighed, and wished she could fee me as happy as I deferved to be; and hoped Heaven would reward me for all the trying scenes I had known, and that my goodness to her would meet a recompence. I affured her the only recompence I wished was to see her regain that composure to which, I hoped, time, aided by her own endeavours, would restore her.

Vol. I.

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Winny

Winny now made her appearance, and had executed all her embaffies with the utmost punctuality. I made my pensive friend walk home with me to dinner. She paffed the day tolerably composed; tho' the big tear often forced a paffage; and she started, and seemed alarmed at every found which reached her; and once or twice appeared to forget where she was, caught hold of me, and cried, hush! I found I must contrive something to engage her attention, as her own mind was a companion she could ill support. She feemed to be an enthusiastic admirer of music; but I could not prevail with her to be any thing but a listener.

Winny joined our party in the evening, and informed her guest a huge box was come to her house. She did not ask who it was for, but was farten it must belong to madam. She then told us, she had sent for one of her daughter's girls, to come

come and help wait on her, as she was fad, old, and good for nothing herfelf, and Nanny was pure spank, and had been used to great shentlefolks, as she had lived at the castle which stood near her mother's, all the fummer, to keep the turkeys. She next addressed herself to me, and faid she had done every thing I bid her; and defired to know, as it was fuch a damp evening, whether she had not better go home and bring the cart for madam, as she seemed but poorly; and she was fure she had not been used to walk a nights by the looks of her. I asked the beauteous drooping figure (for indeed she has a most preposfessing form and face) whether she would permit Winny to drive her home in her carriage; I affured her for one of the kind, it was very compleat, and far from being unpleasant, as I had been obliged to Winny for feveral airings. She declined the offer, as she preferred walking; and thanked

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her hostess for her attention, feared she could never make her the amends the merited for receiving her and treating her fo kindly. I warrant, fays Winny, trouble; I fay trouble; I never thinks about trouble, not I: but bow somdever if there are any thanks in the case they all belong to young Mrs. Llewellyn here; for she made me let you come, and put me in a way to do every thing; and now you are com'd, madam, if ould Winny ap Shinkin can but give you fatisfaction in her poor place, its all fhe wants; and I hopes you'll ax for every thing I don't think of, being as I never feed such fort. of gentry much, till young Mrs. Llewellyn and you came into the vale.

Winny received many thanks and affurances for her well meaning harangue; and after I had coated and wrapped up my friend, I attended her home, and made her go to rest early. When I wished

wished her good night, she pressed my hand affectionately, and faid tho' she did not dare ask, yet she could not help wishing for the pleasure of seeing me in the morning. Oh! cried Winny, never fear; she often comes to breakfast, and I dare fay we shall see her, as she won't rest for fear I should not do ev'ry thing right for you: ah, Lord! fhe has quite turned my house upside down; I hardly knows where to find all my odd matters. This faid, we parted: my mother was entering the door, and feemed very happy I was coming home, as she thought I should be ill if I lost my natural rest again. Away we walked; and I did not fleep the worse for setting up the night before.

My mother tapped gently at the door fome minutes after eight, and begged to know if she might come in. Oh yes!—

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open the door. In she came, quite frightened to find me not up, and faid she feared I was not well after racketing backwards and forwards to Dame ap Shinken's fo. Indeed, fays I, you are a little mistaken. I never was better in my life. She trotted out of the room again quite happy, after telling me she was going to the mill, as Richard did not feem deadly well when he went out; but Sue was at home to 'tend on me, tho' she supposed I should be setting out to fee young madam. Lord all the neighbours were in fuch a pother about it, and think Winny will make a fine penny by her; and they do fo wonder what she is come here for: but Parson Morgan fays as how, for all the looks fo grand, he should like to know whatparish she belongs to, as we shall most likely have the charge of burying her, if the dies; but I told them the was made

of money, and so parson need not trouble his wise head about the matter.

As foon as I had finished the duties of the toilet, I fulfilled my mother's prophecy by haftening to fee how Winny and her guest had past the night. former was rejoiced to hear my voice, and inftantly made her appearance from a pig stye, with much pleasure in her countenance; and defired I would walk in and look what a fine litter of pigs she had got; ten nice rogues as fat as putter. I just peeped at the persons in the straw, and congratulated Winny on her good luck; then enquired how her fair companion did, and received much pleasure in hearing she was just going to rife, and had told Winny she had not passed such a comfortable night for many months. A pretty rofy cheeked girl came running to tell Winny the lady was up, 14 and

and wanted to speak to her; but hung her head on seeing a stranger. What, says I, is this Nanny? Yes, replied Winny, an't she a tidy little girl, tho' but sisteen, come a month before Christmas. Do be so kind to tell madam I'll come presently, but you see I can't leave these little creatures yet.

I carried this apology, and thought the person it was addressed to altered for the better. The deadly paleness had forsook her cheeks, and a faint appearance of damask glowed in its stead. She was much more composed, and I believe sincere in the joy she expressed at my entrance. Her eyes sparkled, and she looked quite animated. She must have been amazingly handsome, when health and happiness beamed around her; and yet she boasts no regularity of features; but the toute ensemble forms a most alluring sace. There

There seems to have been a great deal of archness playing about it. Quite one of your favourites. Her complexion is brunette; and no velvet was ever softer than her skin. Her sigure is delicate, and rather below the middle size, tho forrow has made sad havock, and left me a mere shadow to admire.

Such, my dear Arabella, is the exterior of the fallen Emily Rivers; who, notwithftanding the fatal error which lured her to destruction, is in possession of a mind, fost, amiable, and truly seminine; her sense of the wrong she has done is too exquisite ever to allow much peace to find shelter in her bosom. I would not bespeak a place for her in your favor. Hear but her own sad tale. You shall have it in her own words too, if my memory will be kind enough to permit, tho it will be a tolerable exercise. After our

breakfast was ended, she asked me if I would attend to the story I had promised she should tell me. I wanted to have it postponed till the next day, as I thought a review of unpleasant circumftances would loofe us the ground we had gained fince yesterday; and to-morrow she would perhaps be less affected, as I hoped every day to fee her gain an addition of strength and spirits; besides I had fome beautiful prospects to take her to look at, within a short walk, and I thought air, and gentle exercise, of the utmost consequence towards re-establishing her health. She asked me if I thought walking and talking were incompatible, and affured me till I knew the woman I was making a companion of, the could not rest for fear I should withdraw myself from her, when I had heard how unworthy she was of my notice; and though she had been deceived, she would

would not commence deceiver. We left the cott; I took her under my arm; and she began her recital.

"Tis scarce eight months since I was innocent and happy; the only joy of the best of fathers. How have I requited him for the indulgent kindness with which he treated me from infancy. My mother yielded her life in bringing the miserable creature before you intothe world; but the parent left me was too fond and good ever to fuffer me to know the greatness of my loss; tho' perhaps if she had been alive I might not now bewail my wretched state. My father idolized me; and at the age of fifteen took me from school, and made me mistress of his house. I was too young to act properly in such a situation, without a female guide. I meant not to err, yet the constant scene of pleafure

pleasure and gaity I was engaged in almost turned my head. I was received with smiles of approbation wherever I went. As my father lived in a fplendid stile, and had none but me to inherit the handsome fortune he is possessed of, independent of his Colonelship in the guards, our house was the refort of all the junior officers in his corps. They swarmed round me, and talked of love; but I was too much taken up with myself to think two minutes together of any one in particular. I laughed and flirted with all. Ah! my dearest father! had you known a little more of the female world, you would not have placed a daughter in fuch a dangerous situation. Think of me at the age of fixteen, giving balls and routs; not an hour of my life but was filled with fome engagement. Spending an evening at home, and alone,

alone, was a circumstance I should have been miserable at the idea of. My mornings were passed in rackettings from door to door, and slying to milleners and mantuamakers. Every extravagant thought vanity inspired was gratisted. My father was delighted at the admiration paid me, and thought nothing less than a coronet would be my fortune.

Allen The World &

At Court, I met with a flattering reception; our amiable Queen honoured me with some notice. Thus I lived in one continual round of dissipation for near two years, when a relation of my mother's died in Ireland, and left me a handsome fortune. My father obtained leave of absence, and took me with him to that kingdom, as my appearance there was necessary. Here I met my ruin. Lord Walton was our neighbour;

bour; his villa stood within a quarter of a mile of us; he shewed us the greatest civility and attention, and wanted my father to continue in the house, which was an exceeding handfome one, and part of the legacy bequeathed me. He was always talking to me about his fon; asking me if I had brought a heart along with me, as he must not suffer Augustus to see me unless I could answer this question in the affirmative. Indeed his frequent visits, and the agreeable parties we met at his house, made me feel regret whenever the thoughts of returning to England occurred.

One evening he engaged me to join a musical party who were to meet at his house next evening; and said he should come in the morning to practise with me, as he had promised we should fing

fing a duet together. He was punctual to his appointment; and I received much praise from him for my part of. the performance. When we parted, he defired I would not forget to make myfelf as charming as posible, as he had a young friend to shew me to who would meet me at his concert. I thought minutes months till the carriage which was to convey me to Fern Wood drove to the door. Three hours had I spent in dreffing for this fatal evening, and thought it was impossible to look more elegant. Indeed I never wanted a tolerable opinion of myfelf; I had been told how irrefiftible I was. and believed it. My father, blinded by partiality, faw no faults in me; and I feldom heard any other epithets from him than my fweet creature, my lovely girl, or fomething equally acceptable to my vanity. Excuse this digression;

you must be made acquainted with all my failings.

The company at Lord Walton's was brilliant. There were many new faces, but not the one that had been mentioned. His Lordship seemed chagrin'd at his friend's absence. I asked him if it was not Lord Bellenden he had promised me the pleasure of seeing for the first time? Perhaps your surmises are just, my charming Emily, faid he; and requested I would not name him again, as he felt very angry with him. I obeyed; nor thought about him more. The adulation paid me gave me unufual spirits: I played, sung, and chattered; all ears were disposed to listen to me; silence had taken her stand; and we had just begun our duet, when a loud ring was heard. Lord Walton looked happy; in a moment the

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the door flew open; fomebody called out, be mute, Bellenden !- a young man advanced, with a finger before his mouth. I hardly looked at him till our fong was finished; -ah! then it was I thought of love. Every body flocked round him, and feemed delighted at his appearance among them. When the congratulations on his fafe arrival were a little subsided, his father brought him up to me, and begged I would tell Bellenden my name, as he had asked him not less than fifty times. I blushed .- So Miss Rivers, cried Lord Walton, you have nothing to fay to him then?—away he walked, and left his fon standing with me.

The young Lord asked permission to occupy a seat near me. I did not say no:—he drew his chair close to mine.—How gentle were his accents!—

how elegant and animated his converfation! Pardon these tears; for furely never was fuch a monster concealed under fo charming a countenance! I fancied every amiable quality beamed in his eloquent eyes. Alas! from the moment we met, he formed the deeplaid scheme of levelling me to what I am. He never left my side; after he had placed himself by me. How was I delighted with his attention !- a foftness I never knew before took possesfion of my mind. I played and fung after he came: but the ease and indifference with which I had performed before were flown; I trembled, and fearcely could proceed; and thought it necessary to feign illness: this was readily believed; and imputed to my exertions during the evening's entertainment. Lord Bellenden took one of my hands when my carriage was announced,

nounced, and gently pressed it at parting.

My father had a flight fit of the gout, which confined him to his room. He received me with his accustomed pleafure; vowed I looked like an angel just dropped from above; kiffed me, and asked if I had been agreeably amused? I said yes; told him our party; and then bid him good night. I went to bed; but fleep was fo long a stranger to my eyes, that I did not appear till noon the next day. When I descended, I found Lord Bellenden in the breakfast parlour: he enquired, with much anxiety in his face, after my health; and paid me a profusion of compliments on my musical talents. Two hours slipped away prefently. I thought not of time. Lord Walton descended from visiting my father, and started on seeing me. Very well.

well, Miss Emily, cried he; why your father's frightened to death about you, and has been telling me you shall never come to Fern Wood again: he supposes I have made you ill, by letting you exercife that thrilling pipe too much, as he never knew you fuch a lazy girl when in health: then turning to his fon, he asked him how he could dare to make a fool of his father, by fending him to Colonel Rivers to know if he might be admitted, who immediately defired to fee him; and had been, as well as himself, wondering two hours away at what was become of him: then laying hold of his arm, he took him up stairs, and told me to follow, and pay my duty to my father.

I looked half foolish at this raillery, as I was conscious I deserved it. Lord Bellenden affured him there was no compulsion necessary, if Miss Rivers would introduce 11

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introduce him to her father. They staid the day with us. My father was prodigiously charmed with the figure and manners of the young Lord; and when they were gone he dwelt with pleasure on the attention he paid me, and wished I might make a conquest of him. I was too tenderly interested in this hope to say much on the subject; I hardly assented to the praises bestowed on him. My father seemed assonished I was not more struck with his numerous attractions.— Wou'd I had been less sensible of their force!

Every day the seducing Bellenden found time to visit us. If he had an engagement, we saw him at breakfast; and generally when he returned. If I walked he attended me; when I rode, he never sailed to meet me at some turning, and always seemed to have found what he was

in quest of, as he never left me till I reached home. I cannot describe the transport his affiduities gave me. I no longer sighed for company and amusements. I scarce ever accepted an invitation, but in the hopes of meeting him. On a sudden, he entirely changed from being lively and entertaining, to pensive and thoughtful; his visits were not so frequent, and never, unless when my father was at home; if he came and found him out, his compliments were left, and no notice taken of me. I was miserable at this neglect and soon lost my spirits and health.

My father became alarmed, the had not the slightest suspicion of the cause. He received a call to England; but as he intended returning in a few weeks, would not take me with him; as he feared the effects crossing the sea had on

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on ne, me, when we came, would be more than I could bear in my then indifferent state. He requested I would try change of fcene; and made me write to a lady in Dublin, who had been very urgent to have me with her, but then my father could never part with me. Lord Walton was quite angry, and infifted on my being his vifitor, and told me I should meet some companions of my own sex, as he had three fine mad girls, his nieces, whom he expected the next day; and he hoped to keep them with him fome time. Bellenden remained filent, nor endeavoured to prevail with me to give up the engagement I pleaded in excuse for declining Lord Walton's politeness.

As soon as my father left me, I informed my friend illness prevented my seeing Dublin then, but promised I would be with her as soon as I sound myself able 192

to undertake the journey. Indeed I never intended going, as death would have been almost preferable to giving up the pleasure of sometimes seeing the artful Bellenden. Lord Walton continually fent or called to enquire after me, and frequently brought the Lady Clermonts, three charming young ladies, to fpend the day with me. Sometimes they were accompanied by their defigning coufin, whom I no longer treated as formerly. The alteration which had taken place in him made me reserved. I feared, lest he should perceive my partiality; and yet, notwithstanding I no longer feemed an object worthy his attention, I scarce ever ventured to look at him but I met his eyes. One morning Lord Walton asked if Bellenden had been to take leave of me, and to receive my dispatches for England, as he intended fending him back to Oxford, and

and he was to set off the next day. I endeavoured to answer this dreadful news without emotion, tho' my face felt too warm for my agitation not to be visible.

He had scarcely left me, when his son made me a visit. The deepest melancholy appeared in his blooming countenance; and repeated fighs escaped him. He asked if I would honor him with any commands to Colonel Rivers, as he intended passing a few days in town, and should certainly see him. I thanked him; begged to trouble him with a letter which I would fend him in the evening, and a formal parting took place. As he left the room, I faw his handkerchief drawn from his pocket and held to his head, and heard him fay " can " racks torture like this." I passed the remainder of the day, fad and forrowful; his behaviour, tho' not to be defined, yet VOL. I. I could K

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I could not help construing it in my favor. In the evening I walked to a favorite summer house in the garden; where my thoughts were entirely occupied by the faithless Bellenden. Guess my aftonishment at finding him extended on fome chairs, and to all appearance in a found fleep. I would have quitted the place immediately, but alas! I had not power; my heart throbbed, I trembled, and turned back just to take a farewell look at a face I could for ever have contemplated. My whole frame was fo agitated I was obliged to fink into a chair on which one of his hands reclined -it moved-the agony I felt at the thoughts of his waking and finding me was fo great, that I screamed out, regardless of the consequences. He instantly awoke, and started up. I sat mute, with my head turned from him. Heavens! cried he, and can a forlorn wretch like e

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like Bellenden have fuch a guardian angel as Mifs Rivers? tell me, charming diffurber of my repose, to what must I impute the situation I see you in; can the smallest interest in the fate of a man who loves you to distraction, have been productive of this transporting moment? fay, lovely Emily, may Bellenden cherish this thought? I burst into tears and attempted to leave him. No, cried he, we part not thus-too long have I suffered the torments of sufpence-either kill me at once with the certainty of your indifference, or give me life and happiness by allowing me to hope a return of tenderness is in your power.-What must I think of those tears? are they prefages in my favor? Cease, my Lord, replied I, to humble me lower; I feel with poignancy the imprudence I have been guilty of, in fuffering myself to be thus surprised, and K 2 cannot

cannot condemn you for thinking lightly of me; indeed I deferve the treatment I have met with; permit me to wish you good night; it grows late, and the fervants will be in fearch of me. He took my hand-come then, madam, 'tis over; little did I think Miss Rivers could harbour a defign against my peace—you have fucceeded; and when you meet the man you can honor with a place next your heart, oh! may he love like me! We meet no more, continued he: deny me not one kiss of this dear hand before I bid adieu for ever. I fobbed, I fighed, but could not speak; my feet refused their office, and I was obliged to let him fupport me to a feat. He knelt-my hands were both fast locked in his-he pressed them to his bosom, then to his lips—he asked if I could pity him; he pressed not for my love-perhaps another. No, no, cried I; talk not of another:

ther; 'tis you, and only you. He arose—
am I awake, or does fancy cheat me with
these rapturous sounds?—My Emily,
my love! my angel! and must I leave
you in the moment I am permitted to
call you so. He threw his arms round
me—Now, now, my virtuous friend, the
curtain drops—E'er we parted Bellenden
triumphed—Emily was lost.

ette man you can condrivith a place.ne

I will not attempt to vindicate my part of the guilty scene. Dead to every thought but that of loofing him, and quite subdued by love, I fell a martyr to his arts. Oh! how like a wretched criminal did I steal from this fatal place. In vain were Bellenden's arguments to stop my tears; fast as he wiped them off, fresh streams began to slow; he vowed everlasting sidelity; invoked every Saint in Heaven to witness against him, if he ever ceased loving me more than life;

- K 3 faid

faid he would prevail with his father to grant him a respite for a few days, for he could not leave me thus unhappy; upbraided me for want of confidence in his honor; called me his wife, his deflined wife. - I cannot remember half the perjuries he fwore. Next day he came, and told me pretended illness had procured him the blis of feeing me still a fhorttime longer. His presence calmed my tortured mind; his promises fulled me into tranquillity; he foothed me with fuch gentleness. Alas! I loved him too much to think of confequences; the contrition I felt vanished at the fight of him; every moment he could spare was dedicated to me, and spent in assurances of his unalterable affection.

Thus we lived for some days; when I received a letter from Lord Walton, imploring me to see his son no more. Once,

he faid, to have owned me for a daughter would have given him much happiness: but the indiscretion I had been guilty of obliterated that wish; and he must hope and intreat I would, for my own fake, confider what I had done, and drive a man from my thoughts whom he was shocked to know could be base enough to act the part of a seducer. He concluded by lamenting my fate, and pitying my father, for whom he professed the highest esteem; and who he thought himself in honour bound to acquaint with the unfortunate affair, as it might be a means of rescuing me from the further attempts of his fon. What became of me for three days after I received this, I am a perfect stranger to; I fainted, and was carried to bed; and a fever and delirium kept me there. My maid, who had been brought up by my mother, and loved me, I believe, as her own child, K 4 carefully

BILLINGIA

carefully attended me. The letter which had caused my illness fell into her hands, and she wept over me incessantly. The fourth day I was a little come to myfelf; but fo weak and exhaufted I could hardly move without affiftance. Now reflection most bitter was my companion; my father's image, overwhelmed with grief, and darting looks of wrath, haunted me one moment, then the infinuating form of Bellenden presented itself, and asked if I could give him up for ever. To describe my feelings is impossible: I trembled at the ringing of a bell; and expected the next moment to find myfelf in the presence of my dear injured father.

I neither faw nor heard from my betrayer for almost a week; when one morning Mary entered my apartment with somebody following her, who threw off a great coat he was muffled in, and proved proved no other than Bellenden. I arofe from the chair I was fitting in, supported by pillows, and felt no need of help to enable me to fly to him. He hung over me, and lamented the fituation to which he had reduced me; told me he had left Fern Wood the day I received his father's cruel letter, and that he was supposed to be in England; but he could not fly from me. He asked if I loved him well enough to trust him with the care of me, and begged I would fuffer him to conduct me to England; and that if I would honor him with the title of husband, no stern commands imposed by his father should prevent his giving peace to the bosom of the woman he adored. I affented to his wishes; for to escape the fight of my father would alone have gained compliance; and the confidence I reposed in the honor of the man I loved, when a prospect so flattering to K 5 my

my hopes presented itself, solved every scruple. He thanked me on his knees for the proof I promifed him of my His behaviour was fo delicately tender it banished every doubt; and that night was fixed on for our departure. I wrote a letter for my poor father; giving an account of my fall from innocence, as well as the anguish of my mind would let me. I begged him not to curse me, for I was sufficiently wretched. Mary would have gone with me, but I infifted on her staying to watch my distracted parent, who I should be able to hear of thro' her means. She packed up my cloaths; and as foon as it was dark I was supported by her and the vile Bellenden to a chaife which waited at a short distance from the house.

We arrived in England without molestation. I mention not the events which

which attended us till this happened, as they are immaterial, and I fear you will think me too prolix; it is sufficient to tell you that Lord Bellenden had made himself dearer to me than ever, by his watchful care and the respect with which he treated me. He placed me in the house of a friend in town. I did not like my fituation; to be living alone with two young men was dreadful. I fpent my hours in my own apartment, and always shed tears when he left me; but his presence always dispersed them. Still time went on, and he mentioned not a word of marriage. You must know all, tho' I feel repugnance at telling you the extent of my shame : one night, after I retired to rest and had fallen a sleep, I awoke, terrified at hearing my curtain drawn open; I called out to know who was there. Bellenden answered, and begged I would not be frightened. I afked Coldw.

204

asked him the reason of his intrusion: he clasped me in his arms, and whispered-love-my dearest Emily! I bid him leave me-he vowed he would abfent himself from me for ever, if I treated him thus; where was the love I professed for him flown to? was I not his wife in the eyes of Heaven? No, faid I, Heaven, I fear, thinks far otherwise of me; but when, faithless Bellenden, are you to convince me I have not put my trust in an impostor? To-morrow, faid he, my angel; if you will fet off with me to Scotland. I told him, yes; but my anxiety made me fear he hardly intended ever restoring that peace he once mentioned, to the mind of a woman he had rendered odious to herfelf, and made the scorn of virtue. - Oh; that I could pronounce that last word and yet that very night forget every refolve. I had made never to repeat my crime. The conquest

conquest over me was compleat; and as I now thought myself unworthy to be his wife, I no longer pressed for the completion of his promifes; 'twas true, if he had acted basely I had not been less faulty. For fome time he continued to profess the most ardent fondness for me; and as his friend, Mr. Mortimer, had left his house to us. I lived here the mistress of Lord Bellenden. But the' I wanted not inclination to leave my feducer, I wanted power .- Oh! had I met with a friend like you, I should not now be quite the miferable wretch I am. Alas! I had not one adviser to strengthen the wish I felt to quit a life of infamy. I knew not where to screen myself .- The world I no more might face.- I had but one hope, that was, of leaving it e'er many months elapsed; the conflicts my mind endured had brought on a flow nervous fever, the colour vanished from

my cheeks, and I could not walk without tottering. Bellenden appeared much displeased with me for giving way to my diforder and refusing advice. I told him human aid could not repair a wounded conscience-I wished to die, tho' I knew how unfit I was; but it would release me from fin. He used to laugh, and call me his weeping willow, and asked what mighty sin I had committed. Indeed a change in his manner of addressing me had for some time been visible; he spent most of his time out, and it was generally morning before he returned from his pleasures. As for me, I had never once quitted the house I had been sequestered in almost four months. next or appropriate to a few

When Mr. Mortimer returned home, he expressed much concern at my indisposition, and tried every method to divert

sometimes to a memory his vence.

divert my mind; blamed his friend for the part he had acted by me; and wondered how any man could destroy the peace of fuch a woman. I thought him what he appeared, and really found much comfort in his company and conversation; tho' I ought to have suspected every man of being a deceiver after meeting one in Bellenden, who configned me to the care of his friend, while he shewed himself for a fortnight at Oxford. An uncommon depression of spirits had attended me the day he promised to return. Night came, but he did not appear. I retired to bed, and was just dropping into a kind of doze, when a loud rap at the street door roused me. I listened with eagerness to hear if it was Bellenden. In a moment his voice reached my ears. He feemed disputing with Mortimer, who wanted to detain. him below; but I heard him fay he was tired Stouth

tired to death, and immediately ran up to my room. Few words passed between us, he told me he would talk tomorrow. Soon as the light entered in the morning I awoke, and beheld, instead of Bellenden, Mortimer sleeping by my fide. I shrieked; and took a knife from my pocket. He started up, and attempted to speak; but I put my hand before his mouth; leave me, cried I, for God's sake; let me never see you more, thou barbarous, vile instrument of another's wickedness, or this pen knife enters your heart or mine! He feized the hand which held it, and wrested the little weapon of destruction from me; then ringing the bell, threw himself from the bed, and quitted the room. A fervant entered; but asked no queflions; and fet herself down on the side of it. haver of no our boar sindshoo say

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man.

"oeath, and immediately rain Two days and one night she passed with me, unable either to prevail with me to rife, or take the smallest sustenance. A kind of stupor had taken possession of me; I hardly knew where I was or what had happened to me; fometimes horror unspeakable gleamed thro' my distracted brain; then I raved; tore my hair; till quite spent, I again sunk into insensibility. A short time, no doubt, would have put a period to my existence, had I been permitted to have remained in this state. I prayed and intreated not to be removed from the place I was in, but in vain; my attendant had an order, the fecond evening, to drefs me and pack up my cloaths. At first I was resolute; but what availed it? she told me she could have plenty of help if I was obstinate, and ran on in praise of her mafter's generofity, and wondered I should dislike such an handsome gentleman. I stamped with my foot and bid her be filent. She called me a fine spirited young lady, and said I was going where I should be tamed.

els espormenes mele ufed to peavail with

When the had executed the orders the had received, I was carried out of the house, and placed in a coach which waited at the door. Somebody was in it, who kept filence. The distance feemed fhort from St. James's street, where the wretch, Mortimer, resided, to that I was conveyed to, and which my faviour Jenny has fince informed me was Jermyn street. There they made me alight, and conducted me into a very magnificent drawing room, where two ladies received me. I looked at them, but spoke not; they seated me between them on a fopha, and a fervant entered with some refreshments. The youngest of the females ordered the things to be left.

left, and brought me a glass of something to drink, and the other fetched cakes. I refused both, and finking back on the fopha, burst into tears. Numberless arguments were used to prevail with me to cease grieving and forget my imaginary diffress; they told me, few hufbands liked crying wives; called me Mrs. Mortimer; faid I had made a conquest of one of the finest fellows in town, and hoped I would not be fo blind to my own interest as to refuse one because I had loft another; thought I had managed well, to keep a Lord constant for so many months; and faid I should know better by and by. For ever might they have talked without any interruption from me. I abhorred them too much to return an answer. Sure never was feen a more dreadful looking woman than the old worker of iniquity into whose hands of aguar ber touble selamer I had

I had fallen; the other was young and elegant. Helm dilw team of bedlingth

onorence in tuch a hould! She kill

After intreaties were found to be useless, and that I persisted in not touching any thing which was offered me, I was led up stairs and put to bed. Some whey was brought me by the old wretch, who infifted on my drinking it; she asked me if I intended to starve myself and then descended. I gained a respite from forrow for near two hours by falling afleep, but oh! when I awoke what a fad prospect my mind presented to me; in tears and wailings I passed the rest of the night; and foon as day appeared l left my bed and huddled on my cloaths. My time was spent in creeping up and down the room, till breakfast was brought me by Jenny; the fimplicity, good nature and compassion which beamed in her face attracted my notice; I entered into into conversation with her and was aftonished to meet with artleffness and innocence in fuch a house. She said fhe was newly come, and it was a good place to her, for her mistress gave her no end of things. This girl absolutely perfuaded me to take part of the rea and toast she brought: I begged her to come to me as often as she could while I staved. Her harmless talk had amused me, and banished for a moment my own thoughts. After she was gone, I was visited by both the women I have mentioned. They expressed much joy at seeing me something better; asked if I would not wish for a hair dreffer, as my head was quite flocking, and I must not think of moping by myfelf all day, tho' I should not meet any body but themselves till my health was re-established. I begged to be excused the hair dreffer, and then found

found I was no longer my own miltrefs, for a fellow was fent for. Mils Harriet stayed till he had finished, and vowed he had dreffed me divinely; she brought me a glass to have my opinion, but could not prevail with me to cast a glance at it. She now made me go down stairs with her, and gave me a letter which lay fealed on the table. It came from the vile Mortimer; containing a declaration of the violent passion he entertained for me, and the most fplendid offers if I would put myfelf under his protection; affured me I should not find him a Bellenden; and that I was not quite acquainted with all the wrongs that Lord had done me, as it was himself who wrote the letter I received as from Lord Walton; on purpose to frighten me, and make me run off with him. Mortimer endeavoured to vindicate his own conduct, and

pleaded intoxication and the persuasion of Lord Bellenden in excuse.

I can proceed no further, my Arabella, verbatim; and must beg to be permitted passing over the rest of my fair penitent's narration, and only tell you if she had not met with Jenny I don't think she would have been able to have eluded the pursuit of Mortimer; who from intreaties descended to menaces and threats if the perfitted in refuling to live with him, in the execution of which he was promifed every assistance by the virtuous Mrs. Frazer, in whose sanctuary for vice she had been detained close prisoner six weeks. Jenny walked off with her; having first carried away her cloaths in small parcels, as often as she could steal out. Her watch and fome other valuables were not to be found; but fince she came

came here they have been discovered in the fleeves of a gown, placed there for security by Mary; and their poor afflicted possessor had not searched for them before. At an uncle of Jenny's she stayed a night, to calm her agitated mind after her elopement; he also accompanied her within twenty miles of Teivi Vale, and then configned her to the care of a friend, who did not leave her till the arrived at her humble dwelling. I hardly know what to do with her, or what to fay to her. I cannot ask her to dissipate the melancholy which hangs on her countenance, when the thoughts of her poor unfortunate father's hapless condition lies an uneafy weight on my own mind. A letter was dispatched to Mary two days ago; from whom no intelligence has ever been received by her unhappy Mistress. When an answer arrives, I Savala 1 am

am to address one to Colonel Rivers, if the ruin of his child has had no fatal effects. I cannot suppose either you or your fifter unreasonable enough to expect a reply to letters should follow, when you have read the pages I have wrote. No. no, my love; only thus much to you, and not a syllable to her; I am forry for the occasion which makes Vernon Place so gay; forry Mr. Elliot has not made his appearance, yet glad to find a certain perfon can jest on the subject. I shall set up my marquée as foon as Spring returns, for your reception. Adieu! Send me your comments on the secret history which reaches you from the sequestered corner of this habitable world, where lives

Your fincerely affectionate,

SOPHIA.

Vol. I. LETTER

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The RUSHMEAD.

I have so many new and surprizing things to relate, my lovely Lilly of the Valley, besides annotations and resections on the contents of your thrice-treble letter, that almost an hour has slipped thro' my singers in debating which I shall begin first. Nothing but hearing of and meeting with adventures. I think the burthen of your song seems to claim precedence of my most entertaining North-country cousins; who I little thought of travelling more than an hundred miles to have the happiness of becoming acquaint-

ed with quite so soon, when I last addressed you. How this came to pass, as well as other strange events, shall be postponed till I have given a verdict for or against your nut-brown maid, I was going to fay, who has produced a very good account of her birth, parentage, and education; I wish I could fay as much for fome part of her behaviour; tho', unfortunately circumstanced as she was, the summer-house transaction admits of palliation; and the rest, I believe, we must give in favor of youth, love, and the machinations of her undoer. A large portion of blame, no doubt, falls to the share of her misguided father, for not providing her a prudent female confidante, and for introducing her fo early into life. I fear many parents have had occasion to rue this mistaken mode of conduct as well as the pity-claiming Colonel Rivers. Poor man! do you know Eliza and I fat last night and cried about him. I hope we shall hear good Treeming 1 2 news

news of him. What an exercise for fortitude has he experienced? I fincerely pray he may not have funk under his affliction: as I shall then entertain a diffant hope of feeing the day when he will wipe the tears of penitence from the eyes of his deluded Emily, and speak pardon and peace to her wounded mind; tho' I apprehend they will neither of them ever be very happy again, yet I cannot bear to think of their being miferable for the rest of their lives; that fate should be reserved for the infamous Lord Bellenden; or, in order to make his name bear fome affinity to his character, suppose we procure the licence of Majesty for changing the first letter, and let him in future take that of Hellenden: his creft, a wolf wrapped in a sheepskin, tho if I could have my wish he and his worthy colleague should be chained together, and placed in the Tower, among the leopards and the lions, till age prevents their committing further Smooth ravages ravages in the haunts of Virtue and Innocences for tis wonderful if more damfels than one are not at this time indebted to them for the loss of those bleffings, not fill equal live and when he will wipe

Poor Lord Walton comes in for a small share of compassion, as some severe pangs must have annoyed his bosom when he discovered his darling son, the future support of his name and dignity, to be a deep, defigning hypocrite. I fear there are too many of the same stamp in this world; wirness the number of wretched females, devoted to infamy, who croud the freets of our great city. But what good will moralizing do, I wonder? none at all; fo we will have no more of it; and politively I cannot keep these young ladies and their papa and mama longer waiting for admittance into your august presence, than till I have just mentioned the circumstance which occasioned Eliza and myself this trip into Yorkshire. A trisling fraces at L 3 home TAVEC

home—that is all.—Lady Betty; the dire Lady Betty !- oh, she exceeds our most fanguine ideas, my dear. My father having business which called him from home for near a month, and not chusing to leave his wife fo charming an amusement as his daughters, to exercise her tyrannical tafte on, fent us off, the day before him, to pay our duty to uncle and aunt Shatford. Here they come. Uncle is just going to a meeting of Justices. Rather lucky; as he is dreffed out in honor of the day. Do admire his gilt scarlet waiftcoat and pettycoat in one, for it reaches almost to his knees; by the fashion, it must have descended to him with the family estate. I thought the race of arrant country Esquires had been extinct; but while Squire Shatford exists there will be one left at least; and when he dies, the world will lose an honest man, I believe, tho' the most everlasting foul at beginning stories and wandering into an hundred

hundred others without finishing any one, that ever I met with. And yet there's no being absolutely angry with him, he looks fo happy, and laughs at the good things he fays, till sometimes a suffocation is near taking place. Poor man, he has got a nasty asthmatic cough, which his dearly beloved rappee often puts in a fad passion at those times. But of him no more just vet.-Madam Shatford must be brought forward: one of your notable, managing, good fort of tiresome beings: from morn till night her eternal larum rings; worrying the fervants, fidgetting after the poultry, healing the fick and maimed. giving you the whole process of what she has done, and superintending the quilting frames, which elegant employment she has felected for her daughters. She thinks young ladies should know a little of every thing; and she is astonished at her brother for bringing up his family in the manner he has done. But there are few children

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who have had the fame advantages with her's. She is, belides all this, a lady of wonderful erudition; tho' like most pretenders to what they know nothing about, continually making fome charming blunder when shewing her superiority. She is quite capital, I affure you, in this way. There would be no living many months under the same roof with her. I am dying twenty times a day at the curious explanations she favours us with, and yet must not smile for the world. I downed

Now for the trio of young ladies. Miss Shatford is nineteen to-morrow, Miss Eleanor not quite a year younger, and Miss Hannah almost seventeen. By their shapes you would suppose them all to be in a fair way of producing fome young masters and misses. Upon my word I know not how to give an adequate defcription of these cousins; I never saw any thing quite equal them; right shape and der

eves brows and lathes of the fame figh

and make, as their mama fays, though not beauties; they are indeed to unfortunate in their external appearance, that I don't think it would have been possible to have made them look like the rest of the world, had a method for that purpose been purfued in their education. You would laugh at them yourfelf, Sophia; nay it would be ill-bred to refrain from joining in the simper which constantly appears on their fine broad unmeaning faces, than which no calf's can be whiter; their eyes brows and lashes of the same light shade; the former boast of no vast share of expression, though their colour is certainly much against them. Don't be angry, I know they cannot help all this as well as you, and really at first I was inclined to pity them, till I discovered the high opinion they have of themselves; nobody half so elegant and clever in their own estimation; it was some time indeed before they did any thing but eye us. onth.

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This is the reception they give all strangers. I find they have never flept out of the house in which they were born. There they have imbibed all their ideas; fome from mama, fome from papa, and the rest from a pert, illiterate Mademoiselle. The enormous flipend of an hundred guineas a year is given to a dancing mafter, who still attends them. He teaches quite in the Vestris stile, as Miss Shatford informs me; yet if I may be allowed to judge from her performance, his stile must be entirely his own, and perfectly original; however it answers prodigiously well to him, and he may thank his stars for directing him to the family at Rushmead; for he might have travelled every other part of England over without meeting with fuch ready made dupes.

I was going to finish the family piece, without placing the reverend and solemn Doctor Joseph Shatford in the group, brother

ther to the Squire and rector of the parish, who, as he prefers bleffed fingleness to married cares, refides at the hall and foends his precious time in preserving and pickling butterflies, caterpillars, spiders, graffhoppers, fleas, flies, toads, frogs, &c. &c. and forming a valuable collection of grafs, moss, nettles, flints, pebbles, and ovster shells. So much for this useful member of the community; who I always fit as far from as possible, for fear of being overrun with vermin, of which his pockets are generally full. The hours really pass pleasantly enough amongst these diverting mortals. We have been to a ball; and a most important evening it proved. parations were on the tapis when we arrived. for this event; the family had received an invitation the preceding day from their neighbours Sir George and Lady Carlton; the latter called at Rushmead the morning after we made our appearance, and left her name for the Miss Vernons, and in a fcw

few hours cards walked in, requesting the favor of our company to a dance the next evening. Aunt said we were in high luck, and hoped we had brought handsomethings as she and our two eldest cousins should go very much dressed; she did not intend taking Hannah into public till next year.

We promised to make ourselves as fine as possible; tho' feared we had it not in our power to vie with her and the Miss Shatfords in the richness of apparel. I think I may venture to fay the aftonishment which was visible in the countenances of Madam Shatford and her daughters, was fully equalled in those of her neices, when we all affembled in the yellow damask drawing room, bedizoned for the ball. Defend me, cried Eliza, what no rumps nor merry thoughts, my dear aunt? Rumps and merry thoughts, replied she, emphatically; I think, niece, you can never mean to shew yourself in that dis-What the guise;

dickens,

guise; I would not see a child of mine make fuch a figure of herfelf on any account; but I suppose you young ladies do just as you please, and so nothing is to be wondered at. Pray is it the fashion to go to balls in those great hats, said Eleanor? To be fure it is, answered her fifter; I dare fay my coufins fancy they shall outshine every body, but they will be mistaken, however; for tho' mamma won't let us have our things from London, there will be plenty there that have, and as fmart as themselves, and powdered with such coloured powder and fuch feathers and great To be fure nofegays and every thing. cousin Eliza can never think of getting in at the coach door. Cousin Arabella's head is nothing to her's; and I think the top must be taken off for her to sit.

Just as this polite speech was finished, in came the Squire. A general laugh took place at his entrance. What the dickens,

dickens, faid he, are the women mad? Lord, papa, exclaimed Hannah, why you have not had your hair powdered fo long you have quite forgot to wipe your face after it. He walked to a glass, shook his fides when he looked in it, and fat down almost choaked; while his youngest daughter scraped his face clean. He then asked if all our gewgaws were on, and complimented us with looking as fine as horses. The door now opened gently, and in glided that flick of black fealing wax (as Eliza terms him) Uncle Joey. He moved, flow and erect, to a feat next his brother, when, by a removal of the chair, down came the reverend Doctor Shatford fafe on the carpet; which good office was done him by his brother, who loves fun dearly. He neither looked angry nor pleased at this piece of civility, nor at the laugh which followed it; but rose and placed himself, with his hands before him, in the chair he had fixed his mind on, till we fet off. Mrs.

Mrs. Shatford proceeded first, fan in hand, habited in white damask, her head ornamented with point lappets and a black laced hood, her hair dreffed by her own maid, without powder or curls, her feet in green fattin shoes; then Miss Vernon and fifter, rather fantastical, in crape dreffes, lightly ornamented with dark ribbon and filver foil; absolutely two most fuperb figures. They fidled into the coach without much difficulty, tho' Eliza did flick by the way a little. Miss Shatford and her fifter stepped in after them: the former was robed in her mama's wedding drefs (a fine straw colour) with amazing brocaded bunches of roses, tulips, and carnations, bound together with truelovers knots, the like was never feen; Miss Eleanor blazed in a rose-coloured corded tabby: their hair was tucked up in a remarkable fnug way, with a sparing quantity of gauze pinned on the top, and a sprig of jessamin on one side this, aunt thought

thought mighty neat and fimple. Thus caparifoned, we foon reached Skipmore Abbey, were fet down, and the caroffe ordered back with all possible speed for the gentlemen, and we were ushered into a room full of fine folks- Lady Carlton stepped forward and received us with a profusion of compliments and smiles, hit off with much ease and grace. Sir George feated us; and the two poor strangers underwent a thoro' examination: whifperings were heard from every corner; and a few pretty audible, what is their names? Lady Carlton placed herfelf next me, as foon as fhe had disposed of another string of visitors, who followed us almost immediately. She expressed a prodigious deal of happiness at her good fortune in deferring the commencement of her balls till our arrival, and hoped we did not intend to leave Yorkshire till after Christmas, as she should be happy to have all her public nights graced with our prefence.

fence. A groupe of Right Honourables now entered; which obliged her to relinquish her feat. Sir George asked his fair lady if any body was waited for befides Captain Elliot and his party? Eliza started. Sir George at this instant walked over the way, and told us he had fome fmart fellows to come yet; and begged we would shield our hearts, for they were going to be very forcibly attacked: I do think they are coming; don't you hear a buftle at the door? yes, yes. Away he hurried to meet the identical Elliot and his party. I looked at my next neighbour, (the rofe had forfook her cheeks) and flid a bottle of sel poignant into her hand, tho' I stood in need of a little reviving myfelf, which you will allow probable when I tell you the amiable Powis was one of the two gentlemen who accompanied Elliot; the other I shall introduce presently. Eliza asked if I was not furprized; and wished she could get out

out of the room. I had not time to anfwer, before one of the fair nobleffe stepped forth, lead by Elliot, who was dreffed in deep mourning, and never looked handfomer than at that moment. The fiddles struck up, and a very good minuet was drawing to a conclusion, when the gentleman's eyes, instead of being absorbed in contemplating the transcendent charms of his swimming partner, were wandering round the room, from fair to brown; on a fudden, the hat he had just drawn from his head, dropped on the ground: every body but Eliza fmiled, my coufins giggled, and Elliot looked quite petrified with aftonishment. When he had replaced her Ladyship, Sir George lead him, somewhat loth, to her fifter. The poor girl had indeed a forry partner; his ev'ry look was directed another way; he caught his feet in her furbelows, and went thro' the whole manduvre like a man deprived of his very wits. I had recovered my consternation,

sternation, and was perhaps much more entertained with his performance than any other spectator.

The moment he regained his liberty, we faw him advancing towards us. Eliza's embarras increased considerably. I had only time to honor him with a nod and fmile, as a little imirking youth was brought up to me, and I left the lovers to go and exhibit before the company. When I had finished, Eliza followed my example. Elliot feemed too much transported at the meeting, and too much in love, to be in his fober fenses. Sure as fate, he and Eliza will be man and wife in less than fix months. What mortal can prevent it? fince an old useless uncle has been kind enough to die and leave him an estate of fifteen hundred a year and many desirable et ceteras, not far from Rushmead. This fortunate adventure has kept him from Vernon Place.

But I must not run away and leave my ball friends yet, as I really spent my time amongst them much to my satisfaction; every creature appeared pleafed and happy, and I could not be far otherwise with Powis for a partner. He certainly is not absolutely handsome, but then such an interesting face. I wonder whether he meant any thing (I should like to know, Sophia,) by showing some little assiduity in procuring my hand for the evening, and speaking hardly to any body else. His eyes too I thought more piercing than ever, and rather on the watch to catch mine, which were too favourably disposed to be trusted with giving many returning glances. It is a strange thing people cannot disclose whatever they may have to fay, instead of tantalizing one so. I verily thought he was going to tell me fomething to the purpole, once or twice, and began fanning myfelf and looking on the ground, but it came to nothing; and this is the way he constantly serves me.

Who do you think the other sweet looking young man was, that Elliot brought with him? Edward Milbanke, my love. I think no free affectionated female can deny him a heart. His face is mild, manly and expressive; his person the very quintessence of symmetry, and the most silver-toned voice I ever heard. Powis introduced him to me, and we were intimate friends before we parted; tho' Lady Carlton engroffed him almost entirely, yet he contrived to give her the flip several times, to come and flirt with me. He asked if I would permit him to call on me at Rush-Was not this queer? He would have placed himself next me at supper, had he not been fummoned to a fearnext the patroness of the feast. He thought Eliza a charming woman. Indeed, I never faw her appear to greater advantage; the rivalled every fair one present, myself and cousins excepted. And yet there were fome tolerable faces amongst us; the two Miss Wilmots, clergyman's daughters.

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ters, very nice, little, compact things, and prettily dreffed by Lady Carlton, who has them generally with her when she is in the country; the three Miss Montagus, nipped together like an hour glass, with tolerable faces; Miss Phipps and her mamma, who must have had a trial before they set off to fee who could paint thickest; Miss Curtis, a fine showy woman; her dress carmelite, so trimmed up and down with gauze she gave one a lively idea of somebody tarred and feathered. My coufins, I affure you, both run minuets. I don't know whether it was a fmile of applause, but certainly a smile of some kind displayed itself on every face in the room at the time. In the country dances they appeared in a most happy confusion; stopped the way continually; every body was obliged to lend a hand to pass them on a little, or they would have hopped about in the same place for an hour together. Their papa and mamma were-vastly delighted with them, however; the former declared they did it nicely. We

We did not get home till three o'clock the next morning. According to custom, I was half dead after it; Eliza quite the reverse. She told me, after a few hums and blushes, that Elliot had taken an ungenerous advantage of her; she wished I would fave her telling how, and do her the favor of gueffing; but I chose to be stupid, and have it from her Ladyship's own mouth. Why then, my dear Arabella, he has asked if he may apply to my father; and while I was studying what answer to return, somebody came and sat down close by me, and fo, Lord help me, what shall I do? He whispered thanks for my filence, and I never had an opportunity afterwards of faying a word about Is not this a mighty easy way of settling a business of this nature, Sophia? He is posted off to my father, and I suppose will be at Eliza's feet pouring out his nonfense in a short time. Mr. Milbanke has left his name three mornings, but despairing of meeting with the object of his purfuit, will hardly take the trouble of feeking

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feeking me again. I shall find out from Elliot what the man wants with me, for it is quite past my comprehension. How do you think we employ our evenings at Rushmead? Playing at Pope Joan, for the instruction of the young Shatfords; cards are fo univerfal, aunt observes that her girls must now become acquainted with them, tho' she has herself a dislike to the practice. How long we are to flay, or what Providence intends doing with us when our visit's over, I don't know; as to Eliza she will most likely be provided for foon; and for myfelf, I am vastly indifferent. You have promifed to receive me by and by, and in the mean time continue to cheer me with a frequent fight of your hand writing. Do, dear Sophia, let me know how things are going on in the Vale. Will you not think me a most unreasonable correspondent? Adieu! Fliza desires me to fay she loves you dearly, and so does your own affectionate,

ARABELLA VERNON.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.